

C. P. Rhodes



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CECIL RHODES



Dr. Alfred E. Bascom, M.D., M.C.

CECIL RHODES.

C E C I L R H O D E S

A STUDY OF A CAREER

BY

HOWARD HENSMAN

AUTHOR OF 'A HISTORY OF RHODESIA'

WITH PORTRAITS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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TO
MISS RHODES,
IN SOME SLIGHT RECOGNITION OF HER
VALUABLE ASSISTANCE,
THIS RECORD OF HER BROTHER'S LIFE
IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

A FEW words explaining how and why this book came to be written may not be out of place. For some years past I have been brought into rather intimate contact with Mr Cecil Rhodes and his works, and have taken a great interest in studying the methods and character of one who—whatever his faults and shortcomings may be—plays a very important part in the history of the British Empire at the present time. It had long struck me as a remarkable fact that no real attempt to describe Mr Rhodes' career had ever been made; and in view of the great amount of attention which has been devoted to South Africa for the past three years, I at length, after much consideration, decided to make some sort of an attempt to fill this gap. Hence this book.

As at first designed, the work was only intended to be a comparatively small one, setting forth without bias or prejudice the salient features so far of Mr Rhodes' life. As I progressed, however, the book grew and grew until it assumed its present form. I

venture to think that in the pages which follow the reader will find set out the life-story of the man who has for many years past dominated South African polities, with nothing omitted that is essential and nothing included that is superfluous.

Unfortunately for his biographer, Mr Rhodes is in somewhat a similar position to Mr Chamberlain, inasmuch as he acts with many people as the proverbial red rag to a bull. This being so, a certain amount of adverse criticism is only to be expected. I have, however, made it my constant effort to hold the scales of justice evenly, and I may at once say that I decline absolutely to regard Mr Rhodes either as a heaven-sent statesman or the incarnation of all that is wicked. He is in my eyes an empire-builder of great originality, and a man who makes a most fascinating study.

The writing of this book would have been a well-nigh impossible task if I had not been accorded much valuable assistance by many of those who have known Mr Rhodes intimately for many years past. To the aid rendered me by Miss Rhodes I have already referred in the Dedication, and for the photograph of Mr Rhodes as a child I am indebted to the courtesy of Colonel F. W. Rhodes, D.S.O. Among those I would now especially thank are Mr R. Geare, M.A., the Principal of the Bishop's Stortford Grammar-School, who kindly placed the records of the school at my disposal for information as to Mr Rhodes' career there; the Rev. A. G. Butler, who was a tutor at Oriel College, Oxford, in Mr Rhodes' undergraduate

days ; and the Rev. A. L. Barnes-Lawrence, M.A., one of Mr Rhodes' closest friends at the university. I have also to thank the Secretary of the British South Africa Company, Mr J. F. Jones, and other officials, for their assistance and for the loan of several of the photographs which are included in the book. The Appendices and map of Rhodesia are also included by special permission of the Chartered Company. There are many others, too, who by their advice and willing assistance have contributed to lighten very considerably a heavy undertaking, and to all of these I would tender my very best thanks.

HOWARD HENSMAN.

FOREST GATE, ESSEX,
November 1901.

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CECIL RHODES.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS, 1853–1870.

THE first mention of the family from which the subject of this book is descended occurs, so far as can be ascertained with any degree of certainty, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, when a William Rhodes came to London and bought a farm situated in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury and close to Gray's Inn. Here he settled down to cultivate assiduously his land, and soon gained some local reputation as a successful farmer and grazier. Part of his estate occupied the site now covered by the Foundling Hospital; while the records of the period indicate that this William Rhodes also owned a small detached estate farther out in the country, in the neighbourhood of St John's Wood, forming part of what is now known as Regent's Park.

Devoting himself to his family and his farm, and leaving politics and affairs of State severely alone, William Rhodes amassed a considerable fortune, and was able to give each of his children such advantages

in the way of education as in those days did not usually fall to the lot of the family of a yeoman.

For a generation or two we lose sight of the family, the next member of it to attract any attention being a Samuel Rhodes, who flourished in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and dwelt on what was then the northern, or north-eastern, boundary of the Metropolis. By trade he was a burner of bricks in rather a substantial way of business, and, aided by a family of energetic sons, he soon became known as one of the largest owners of brickfields round about London.

Like most of his family who preceded and followed him, Samuel Rhodes was gifted with the faculty for making money and for turning it to good account, and he had the satisfaction of seeing his family mounting steadily in the social scale. He was able to buy a considerable estate at Dalston, then a little detached village. This estate, by the way, still remains in the family, and Mr Cecil Rhodes possesses, roughly speaking, a three-fifths interest in it.

Of Samuel Rhodes' sons, one of them—William, a favourite name in the Rhodes family—quitted suburban London, and settled down at Layton Grange in the heart of rural Essex, where he acquired a large estate. From Thomas, another son, is descended the Northamptonshire branch of the family, now represented by Mr William Rhodes, whose seat is at West Haddon Hall.

William Rhodes, the owner of Layton Grange, was succeeded in his estate by his son, Francis William Rhodes, the father of Cecil, who had been educated for the Church and had already entered into Holy Orders. This gentleman was twice married, his



THE HOUSE WHERE CECH RHODES WAS BORN

second wife being a member of an old Lincolnshire family living in the neighbourhood of Sleaford. While still a comparatively young man, the Rev. F. W. Rhodes received the appointment of vicar of the parish church of the little country town of Bishop's Stortford; consequently he quitted his Essex home to live in Hertfordshire.

He had a numerous family, in which boys greatly outnumbered girls, and it was his fifth son who was destined to make the name of Rhodes known to the uttermost ends of the civilised world. By a blunder which might easily have been avoided by the exercise of a little care, most current books of reference state that Cecil Rhodes was his father's fourth son, whereas he was instead the fifth. The children of the Rhodes family were as follows: Herbert (destined, as will be seen later, to meet with an untimely and terrible death in the heart of Central Africa while big-game shooting), Louisa, Edith, Francis William (the distinguished soldier), Basil (died in infancy), Ernest, Cecil John, Frederick (died in infancy), Elmhurst, Arthur Montague, and Bernard Maitland.

Cecil Rhodes was born on July 5, 1853, three months after the British Government had definitely decided to abandon the sovereignty of the Orange River State, and about eighteen months after the signing of the document, since famous as the Sand River Convention, by which Great Britain recognised the full independence of the Transvaal State.

The vicarage of Bishop's Stortford was a typical English country clergyman's abode, and no better environment for one of Cecil Rhodes' quiet, thoughtful temperament could possibly have been found. It was in this atmosphere of refinement and sincere

religion that the child's character was moulded, and the effects of his early upbringing are still to be observed in Mr Rhodes' character.

One of the earliest acts of the Rev. F. W. Rhodes on receiving the living of Bishop's Stortford was to resuscitate and reorganise the ancient grammar-school of the town, which had fallen into neglect and decay. To this school each boy of the Rhodes family was sent in turn. It was on November 4, 1861, that Cecil followed his three elder brothers there. At this time he was little more than eight years of age, and so far had been educated entirely at home. Even at this tender age, however, the boy who was in after-years to loom so large in his country's history gave promise of talents above the ordinary.

At school Cecil's strongest subjects from the very first were religion, French, and the classics. In mathematics he was strangely weak. History and geography also were favourite subjects of his. While working hard at his studies and overcoming difficulties with that dogged determination and iron will which has ever been a dominant feature of his character, Rhodes did not neglect athletics, and on several occasions he took part in the school sports. His frame, to look at, was slender and delicate. His face was only slightly tinged with colour, and a mass of dark, waving hair coupled with his thoughtful grey eyes served to give him an air of delicacy which the general state of his health did not quite justify. Studious and "bookish" he undoubtedly was; but he could scarcely be called delicate in health at this period.

A notable event at the Bishop's Stortford grammar-school at the time when Rhodes was a pupil there



CECIL RHODES AS A BOY

was the annual “festival” which preceded the prize distribution, and it was customary on these occasions to give excerpts from various Greek, French, and English plays. In these Rhodes took his share. He finally quitted the grammar-school at Christmas 1869, after having been there for twenty-four terms. During this time he had endeared himself to his masters and his companions alike, and there has been no pupil of the little grammar-school of Bishop’s Stortford more popular than the one who has shed the most lustre upon it.

In his schoolboy days Rhodes manifested many traits which have been among his most prominent characteristics in later years. He had an indomitable spirit and a dogged perseverance, which enabled him to accomplish almost any task which he set himself. A disinclination to be behind any of his rivals, whether in their studies or in their games, likewise distinguished him; and whatever it was he did, he did it thoroughly and earnestly. His temper was, in the main, genial and sunny; but at times he had outbursts of that imperiousness of will which has marked his later career, and was wont to chafe somewhat at the admonitions of his masters. A story is current at his old school to-day that on one occasion, when chastised somewhat severely, and, as appeared to him, unjustly, by a junior master, Rhodes in a momentary fit of anger seized a heavy book lying on the desk beside him and made a motion as though to assault the master with it. However, he seemed to quickly recollect the unseemliness of his conduct, and replaced the book on the desk with an incoherent apology.

When Rhodes had left the school, carrying with

him the goodwill and esteem of his masters and comrades, he continued his studies for some months under the direction of his father; but he seemed unable to fix upon a career. His brother Francis was at this time in the army class at Eton, and it was evident that at least one of his other brothers would adopt a military career. Cecil, however, had no inclination for the life of a soldier, and to decide on a profession was a hard task. His name was entered at Oxford, and for a short period it seemed possible that he would follow in his father's footsteps and go into the Church. Providence, however, directed his unwilling footsteps into the path that was to lead to fortune and to fame, though at the time it seemed as if his life were destined to come to an untimely end before he had reached his majority. As has been seen, his health, though not really bad, was never of the strongest, and his close attention to his studies, together with a severe chill, brought on a serious affection of the lungs which left him very weak for some time. This was in the early part of 1870. On his convalescence the family doctor recommended that the youthful invalid should take a long sea - voyage as the best means of restoring his shattered health, and this view was confirmed by a London specialist who was consulted on the subject.

This being so, it was decided that Cecil should visit his eldest brother, Herbert, who some few years previously had quitted the family circle to try his fortune as a cotton - planter in Southern Natal, a colony which at that time was attracting much attention. Accordingly preparations were made for his departure, and he set sail for Durban on June 21, 1870. As the pale-faced, delicate lad paced the

deck of the little sailing-vessel, and saw its head turned southwards and the cliffs of England rapidly fading out of sight behind him, he little thought of the brilliant career he was destined to carve out for himself in South Africa, and how the parting from his family and the abandonment of a university career were in reality blessings in disguise.

He had within him, however, that power which probably would have ensured his success in any career he had turned his mind to. It is difficult for us now to imagine Cecil Rhodes as a bishop in gaiters and shovel hat, but there can be little doubt among any who have studied him at all closely that, had he at the age when he sailed for Africa determined upon entering into Holy Orders, he would to-day have been prominent in the counsels of the Church of England.

In these days of quick steamships doing the journey from England to the Cape in seventeen days, it is not easy to realise that at the time that Rhodes sailed for Africa the voyage to Durban took about seventy days; but so it was. It was not until September 1, 1870, that he landed on African soil. Making a short stay at Durban, he was soon on his way to his brother's plantation, where he settled and speedily began to win back his lost health and vigour.

CHAPTER II.

SOUTH AFRICA AS MR RHODES FOUND IT.

AT this point it is interesting, and indeed necessary, to delay the narrative of Mr Rhodes' life in order to examine the condition of the southern portion of the African continent at the time when he first arrived there. So many things were transpiring about this time which were to have great influence on Mr Rhodes' career, that it would be almost impossible to form a correct judgment of it if these were not thoroughly understood and explained.

Three years previously, in 1867, diamonds had been discovered in the region to the north of the Orange river. This discovery was made accidentally. A Boer farmer one day saw a native child gleefully playing with a small pebble that glittered and coruscated in the sun with unusual brilliance. He took the stone from the child, examined it, and carried it home with him. He could have had but little idea of what the stone really was, for, probably, the only time he had ever heard of diamonds was when he read the Old Testament; but a Boer has always a keen eye for business, and thinking that the stone might have some commercial value, the farmer showed it to a British trader named O'Reilly. O'Reilly

seems to have recognised the stone immediately as a diamond, and bought it of the Boer—after considerable haggling—for £20. Next he submitted it to Dr Atherstone of Grahamstown—an authority on mineralogy—who unhesitatingly declared it to be a diamond of the purest water. The diamond was then shown to Sir Philip Wodehouse, High Commissioner at the Cape, and was bought by him from O'Reilly for £500.

This discovery at once led to a rush to the Vaal and Orange rivers, and several stones, varying in purity and value, were found during the next year or two by fortunate diggers. The largest of them was the "Star of Africa," discovered in 1869. This stone weighed $83\frac{1}{2}$ carats uncut, and was valued at £20,000. It seemed as though every yard of ground on the banks of the Orange and Vaal rivers had been prospected, and the diamond "boom" was dying away, when, in 1870, the Du Toit's Pan mine was discovered about eighteen miles from the Vaal river. So soon as the richness of this mine in diamonds became apparent, a large number of "claims" were taken up in the district. Following quickly on the discovery of the Du Toit's Pan mine came the finding of the Colesberg Kopje mine and the De Beers mine. These revelations of vast and unsuspected wealth caused another rush to the diamond-fields, much greater than the first; and it was when this second rush was at its height that Cecil Rhodes landed in Africa. It is rather a strange coincidence that the discovery of the diamond-fields of Griqualand West should synchronise with the arrival in Africa of the man who was in course of time to become the controller of the whole output of diamonds in South Africa.

All this affected the internal affairs of Cape Colony, and of South Africa generally. Thousands of diggers were attracted to the diamondiferous tract of land in the fork between the Vaal and Modder rivers. Mining camps of considerable size began to spring up in every direction, and men of many nations jostled one another in the race for wealth. The influx of these miners had a very marked effect on the commerce and revenue of Cape Colony, as will be seen by reference to the following figures, which show the rapid increase in the prosperity of the colony between 1870, the year in which the "dry diggings" were discovered, and 1874, when the "boom" had given way to the steady and quiet development of the resources of the diamond-fields :—

	1870.	1874.
Imports into Cape Colony . . .	£2,352,043	£5,558,215
Exports from Cape Colony . . .	£2,453,768	£5,138,838
Shipping of Cape Colony (in tons)	335,509	691,855
Revenue of Cape Colony . . .	£831,211	£1,907,951
Expenditure of Cape Colony . . .	£795,695	£1,199,970

It will be seen thus that the economic results of the discovery of the diamond-fields were far-reaching, and formed the first stone in the erection of the future prosperity of Cape Colony.

The political changes brought about by the finding of diamonds also were very considerable, and indeed may be said to have influenced the relations between the British and the Dutch in South Africa down to the present day. The chief cause of these political effects was the fact that the diamond-fields were within debatable territory, claimed alike by the Orange Free State, the Transvaal, and Waterboer, the chief of the Griqua tribe. The Free State was the first to assert its sovereignty over the diamond-fields, and an im-

partial judge must admit that it had good grounds for claiming that they lay within its territory. The Free State set about trying to establish some form of settled control of the fields, and for some months was permitted to do so without protest. Adhering to the policy of non-interference in events which transpired in South Africa outside the limits of British territory, the Imperial Government remained passive for some time, and watched with merely academic interest the contentions for the diamond-fields between the Orange Free State and Waterboer, who claimed that his tribe was independent of Boer control, and that his territory lay outside the Boer boundaries. Lord Kimberley was at that time Colonial Secretary in Mr Gladstone's Administration. At length, acting on the urgent advice of the High Commissioner at the Cape, the Imperial Government decided to take a more active share in the dispute and sided with Waterboer, declaring that Griqualand West lay outside the limits of the Free State as defined by Sir Harry Smith and accepted by the Free State at the time when its independence was granted.

It is difficult to form a correct judgment on the rights and wrongs of this case. Though the boundary of the Free State was very vaguely defined in this region, the weight of evidence seems to be in favour of the Boers. The British Government, however, decided to refer the matter to arbitration, though the Free State protested against this course being adopted; and with great short-sightedness they selected Lieutenant-Governor Keate of Natal as arbiter. It was a most unfortunate choice. Mr Keate, of course, was a gentleman of unblemished integrity and a most upright administrator, and it is

certain that he did his best to be impartial in deciding this question of the ownership of the diamond-fields. The fact remains, however, that he was a servant of the British Government, which, although not an actual party in the arbitration, made no secret of the direction in which its sympathies lay.

The suspicions of the Boers were at once aroused, therefore, and there was great discontent among them when Mr Keate gave his verdict in favour of Waterboer, and the diamond-fields were declared to be outside the limits of the Orange Free State. The Boers felt that they had been "jockeyed" out of their rights by the sharp practice of the British Government; and this feeling was intensified when almost immediately Waterboer placed his territory under the protection of the British Government, who at once organised Griqualand West into a lieutenant-governorship. It cannot be denied that this placing of the diamond-fields under the control of a strong Power like Great Britain was for the best; but the Boers—small blame to them—could not be brought to see the matter in this light. The beaten party never recognises the justice of its opponent's cause. The fact that the award which placed the diamond-fields under the control of Great Britain was made by an official of the British Colonial Office rankled in their minds for many years; nor is it surprising. Supposing that the conditions had been reversed: if the President of the Transvaal had been the arbiter and had awarded the diamond-fields to the Free State, it would have been a very difficult task to convince the British colonists that the award was absolutely just and impartial. Right or wrong, however, the diamond-fields passed under the control of

the British Government, and here for a time we can leave them.

By its interference in the dispute between Waterboer and the Orange Free State, the British Government showed that it had once more changed its attitude with regard to South Africa, and further evidence of this was soon supplied by the annexation of Basutoland to the Cape. The Colonial Office had, temporarily at any rate, abandoned its position of non-intervention outside the limits of the British South African States. Lord Kimberley and his successor at the Colonial Office, Lord Carnarvon, both gave evidence by their actions that the British Government was recognising its position in South Africa, and the necessity for pushing the British rule into the interior. This, however, as will be seen later, was only a flash in the pan, and Downing Street quickly relapsed into its traditional attitude of *laissez faire*.

Simultaneously with the adoption of a limited policy of expansion in Africa on the part of the British Government, the Government of the Transvaal seemed disposed to modify its attitude with regard to outside states. Strangely suspicious and distrustful of the immigration of foreigners, and especially of British, into its territories, the Boer Government had all along done all it could to keep aliens at bay and to close the Transvaal to all save its own people. With the discovery of the Lydenberg gold-fields in 1869 the Transvaalers saw with feelings akin to consternation a sudden influx of foreign miners into the heart of their country. The Boers strove desperately to stifle the gold industry in its birth, and by repressive laws and regulations succeeded in pre-

venting the mines being worked to any great extent. Such was the traditional attitude of the Boers. But it was suddenly reversed in 1871, when the first law permitting the working of the gold mines in the country was passed by the Transvaal Raad, and a Mining Commissioner was appointed for the Zoutpansberg district.

While, as had been said, steadfastly averse from the admission of foreigners within the limits of the territories they were already in possession of, the Boers of both the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were ever restlessly endeavouring to extend their borders and to bring the land occupied by various independent native tribes under their control. Totally incapable of developing the country they already possessed, the Boers were a prey to that land-hunger which we have been lately taught to believe is the exclusive vice of the British nation. It was the rich corn-growing country of Basutoland that first attracted their attention, and for many years the Orange Free State waged almost incessant war on the Basuto nation. As far back as 1866 the Free State had compelled Moshesh, the paramount chief of the Basutos, to cede to them a portion of the best corn-growing country of Basutoland, and to acknowledge himself and his tribe their vassals.

Moshesh had appealed to Great Britain in vain for protection against these inroads. England in those days regarded colonies as a burden and a bore,—or, rather, for the people of the country had more good sense, the British Government so regarded them,—and therefore was not disposed to undertake any fresh responsibilities in South Africa merely for the sake of saving a few miserable natives from extermin-

ation at the hands of the Boers. The man who was to be the first to recognise the importance of Great Britain being the paramount Power in South Africa was at the time of Moshesh's appeal to the British Government a schoolboy in the playground of the Bishop's Stortford grammar-school, and apparently there was no one either in South Africa or in London with foresight sufficient to see it.

Not content with the land they had already torn from Moshesh, the Boers continued to ravage his country. From 1866 to 1868 they waged almost continuous war on him. In the latter year Moshesh found himself with 2000 of his bravest warriors slain or prisoners in the hands of the Boers, the kraals of his tribe broken up and burnt, his crops destroyed, and starvation staring him and the remnant of his tribe in the face. In despair the Basuto chief again approached the British Government, and in a letter full of genuine pathos begged that he and his people might "rest and live under the large fold of the English flag." This time his prayer was heard, and, though with considerable reluctance and misgiving, a proclamation was issued declaring Basutoland to be British territory, and calling upon the Boers to withdraw from the country. As was only to be expected, this step caused an angry protest from the Boers; but by an agreement signed at Aliwal North in 1869, substantial compensation was paid to them for their withdrawal from a country in which they had not the slightest right to be, and they were permitted to retain the land which Moshesh had ceded to them in 1867.

While the Boers of the Free State were thus fighting for the possession of Basutoland, those of

the Transvaal were attempting to gain a footing in the countries around their borders. In 1868 President Pretorius issued a proclamation extending the boundaries of the Transvaal as far eastwards as Delagoa Bay, and westward to Lake 'Ngami, on the western side of what is now known as the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The Transvaal based its claim to this latter territory on various alleged concessions by chiefs of the Bechuana, Baralong, Batlapin, and other tribes. The claim to the country to the east of the Transvaal and extending to Delagoa Bay was received with amazement by both Portugal and Great Britain, who immediately declined to recognise the pretensions of Pretorius. After fruitless discussion and negotiation, it was decided to refer the ownership of Delagoa Bay and the surrounding country to the arbitration of the President of the French Republic. Parenthetically it may be mentioned here that Great Britain had also put in a claim for the ownership of Delagoa Bay, but had very little evidence on which to base her contention. Ultimately the decision of Marshal MacMahon was in favour of Portugal, with a saving clause to the effect that the Transvaal was to have free access over Portuguese territory to the sea.

The determined attitude of the natives in the portion of the Bechuana country claimed by the Boers effectually prevented the Transvaal from extending its borders in that direction, while the commendably—and unwontedly—firm attitude of the British Government showed Pretorius and the Boers generally that they would not be permitted indefinitely to enlarge their territory whenever the fancy took them to do so.

Nevertheless, the Boers stubbornly maintained

their ground in Bechuanaland ; and, while ostensibly withdrawing their forces and leaving the natives their independence, in reality they had decided not to yield one jot of their claims. Montsoia, the paramount chief of the Baralongs, successfully proved his contention that his tribe was free from any Dutch control ; and Pretorius and his chief adviser, Commandant Paul Kruger,—suspected by many to be the moving spirit in these schemes of Boer expansion,—affected to withdraw their claims to occupy the Baralong country. In spite of this, however, in March 1870 Montsoia found it necessary to write a letter of protest to the Landdrost of the Potchefstroom district against a renewed attempt by Boer agents to levy taxes on his people. In this letter Montsoia stated that unless the claim of the Boers to tax the Baralongs was finally relinquished he would be compelled to appeal to the British High Commissioner at the Cape to arbitrate between them.

The entrance of the British into the dispute between them and the Baralongs was the very last thing that the Transvaalers desired, and their reply to Montsoia was characteristic in the extreme, and seems to bear in every word of it the master-hand of the wily Paul Kruger. This reply was delayed for some months, and when at last it was delivered the discovery of diamonds on the Orange river had been made. The Boer note avoided anything like a direct reply to the points raised by Montsoia, contenting itself with a specious invitation to the chiefs of the Baralong, Batlapin, and other tribes to meet President Pretorius and Commandant Kruger at a great assembly near where the historic little town of Mafeking now stands. The chiefs responded to

this invitation, and the meeting was held, when the Boers' delegates, with a great show of tender regard for the wellbeing of the native tribes, which was as surprising as it was unusual, invited the chiefs to join their lands to the Transvaal and so "save" them from the British. This was akin to one traveller suggesting to another that he should hand over his money and valuables to him at once in case he was stopped by highwaymen at some future time. Montsoia and his fellow-chiefs were not to be deceived by the honied words of the Boers, however, and they declined point-blank to consider the proposal. As Montsoia put it, with a happily turned phrase which must have excited the admiration of Kruger, himself a past-master at phrase-making, "No one ever spanned an ox and an ass in the same yoke."

"Let us live together," pleaded the Boers; but the chiefs shook their heads and remained obdurate to all the blandishments Pretorius and Kruger could bestow upon them. The meeting therefore broke up without any tangible result, and the Boers were compelled to cast about them for other grounds upon which to base their claims to the sovereignty of the Baralong country.

Another event of some interest which occurred about the time that Mr Rhodes landed in South Africa was the death of Umsiligaas, the chief of the powerful Matabele tribe. His successor was his second son, the afterwards famous Lobengula, with whom Mr Rhodes was destined to come into such close contact in the future.

With regard to the great stretch of country lying to the north and north-west of the Transvaal, across the Limpopo or Crocodile river, which to-day bears

the name of Mr Rhodes, little was known in 1870. Isolated parties of Boers had from time to time crossed the Limpopo and visited the apparently boundless plains of southern Matabeleland, but so far no systematic attempt to settle there had been made. As early as 1864, however, a German explorer named Karl Mauch had discovered the Tati goldfield in the south-west corner of Matabeleland, and in 1869 two explorers, named Baines and Nelson, discovered the gold-belt of Mashonaland while making an extensive tour in that region, which was then almost entirely unknown.

To sum up. At the time when Cecil Rhodes arrived in Africa Cape Colony was at the commencement of a period of great commercial prosperity following upon the discovery of the diamond-fields. The British Colonial Office was once more "wobbling," and, after a period of steadfast non-intervention outside the limits of the British colonies, was showing signs of an inclination to extend its sphere of influence by taking over the lands of several native tribes in danger of extermination by the Boers. Paul Kruger was rapidly coming to the front in the counsels of the Transvaal, and was at the head of the majority of the Burghers who demanded the extension of their territory.

The moment was opportune for the appearance of a British champion who, counteracting the machinations and intrigues of the Boers, should weld the fragments of the native states together and make them into a compact whole under the British flag; and it was at this moment that Cecil Rhodes arrived in Southern Natal, and settled down for a short time to the prosaic life of a cotton-planter.

CHAPTER III.

RHODES AT OXFORD.

IN 1871 Herbert Rhodes, with that restlessness of disposition which was ever the most prominent feature in his character, grew tired of the humdrum, unexciting life of a cotton-planter in Natal, and determined to set off for the diamond-fields, there to try his fortune. Cecil stayed on at his brother's plantation for some few months after his departure; then he in turn was seized with a desire for diamond-digging, and attracted by the possibilities of great wealth quickly acquired which that industry offered. The cotton plantation was sold, and Cecil made his way across Africa to Colesberg Kopje, where his brother had previously taken up his abode.

The laws controlling the diamond-fields at that time did not permit any one to own more than one claim. A "claim," it may be explained, was a piece of diamondiferous ground about thirty-one feet square. At the beginning, Cecil Rhodes and his eldest brother shared a single claim between them, and the two young men set about developing their property in energetic fashion, though with no very conspicuous success at first.

From the day of his first arrival in South Africa Rhodes had been growing steadily stronger, and by the

time he had spent a few months in the dry and bracing atmosphere of the diamond-fields he seemed to have completely shaken off the chest complaint which had only a short time previously threatened to have a fatal termination. This being the case, he decided to follow the wishes of his family,—the more readily, perhaps, because they coincided with his own aspirations,—and to return to England in order to matriculate at the university. His name was entered at Oriel College, Oxford, and in 1873 the young man quitted the democratic and cosmopolitan community of the South African diamond-fields to enter into the quiet, studious atmosphere which ever hangs over a university town. During the whole of the time that Rhodes had been in Africa he had managed to keep up his studies, and therefore he experienced no difficulty whatever in passing the matriculation examination, which he did on October 13, 1873, being then a few months over twenty years of age. During the time he was at Oxford it was Rhodes' habit to spend the summer term at the university, and then at the end of about six months to return to the Cape and the diamond-fields. Dividing his time between England and Africa, he was able to read for his university degree and at the same time to maintain his connection with the diamond mines. He also avoided the rigour of the English winter, for though by this time he seems to have shaken off the effects of his chest complaint, to have wintered in England would have been to submit his lungs to a strain under which they would have probably broken down once more.

The demands which his calling made upon his time did not prevent Rhodes from pursuing his studies, and in due course he passed the necessary examina-

tions and took his B.A. and M.A. degrees together in 1881, after he had been a member of the university for about eight years. Strangely enough, one often comes across statements in the public press at the present day to the effect that though Mr Rhodes was up at Oxford for some years, he quitted the university without taking his degree. How this fiction became current it is impossible to say, but a reference to the records of Oriel will show the incorrectness of the statement.

With regard to Mr Rhodes' career at Oxford, I have been fortunate enough to receive some personal impressions of him as he appeared to his contemporaries, and these may be given here with convenience, and any comment upon them reserved for a somewhat later stage. It is necessary, however, to preface these reminiscences with the remark that in one or two instances slight errors have crept into them, due, no doubt, to the length of time which has elapsed since the events related occurred: these will be pointed out nearer the end of the chapter. Those supplying these "personal recollections" are the Rev. A. G. Butler, M.A., of Oxford, who in Rhodes' university days was a tutor at Oriel, and the Rev. A. L. Barnes-Lawrence, M.A., who was an undergraduate at Oriel in Mr Rhodes' time and was in his "set." I judge it better to give each of these gentlemen's impressions of Mr Rhodes in separate and distinct form as they reached me. The first is the narrative of the Rev. A. G. Butler.

I. *The Rev. A. G. Butler, M.A., writes:—*

"Rhodes got an attack on the lungs while rowing in our [Oriel] boat one spring term—I have not the

date [1874—Ed.]—and had to go to the Cape for the following winter. Then he went up to Kimberley and began his connection with the diamond-fields, which has led to such great results. He still continued his connection with Oriel and Oxford, returning to us in the summer, and in general spending six months at the Cape and six months in Oxford or England. Such a life gave no time for reading for Honours, even if he had wished it, but he passed the usual Pass Examinations with ease at the proper times. Much of his reading was carried on in out-of-the-way places and on board steamers, and it is not a little remarkable how he got at the heart of subjects which many fail in reaching.

“Thus, in an interesting speech in our Oriel Hall last summer term (1899), when he came to Oxford to take his doctor's degree, he told us how much he had been interested in Aristotle's definition of virtue in the ‘Ethics,’ ‘as the highest activity of the soul living for the highest object in a perfect life.’ That had always seemed to him the noblest rule for a man to follow, and he had made it his rule from the first. But he had been told that he had misunderstood Aristotle, that he did not speak of ‘living for the highest object’ but of ruling life ‘by the highest principle of right.’ If that was so, perhaps he had sometimes offended; but his hearers must remember that in a somewhat rude state of society, such as was to be encountered in some parts of South Africa, certain rights are not clearly defined and understood as in more civilised countries—that, in short, it is somewhat of the old wild struggle for existence in which often ‘liberty suffers and justice is trampled underfoot.’ It was a long and riveting speech of great

power, and at the end Rhodes emphasised his earlier assertion that he should continue to live for his old highest object of empire-making, though not unguided by the wisdom of experience and—in some respects—of suffering.

“In an earlier part of his college career Rhodes was once reported to his college dean as not coming to lectures properly. C. R. defended himself by stating that the lecture was at a very early hour, which did not suit him. Then on being pressed with the difficulty of getting through his examination without lectures, he replied, ‘Oh, I promise you I’ll manage it. Leave me alone and I shall pull through.’ The dean, who knew his man, recognised a person who could be trusted, and turned his blind eye for the future, as far as possible, to sundry negligences of this sort on the part of so masterful and yet so reliable a pupil.

“Rhodes’ career at Oxford was uneventful. He belonged to a set of men like himself, not caring for distinctions in the schools and not working for them, but of refined tastes, dining and living for the most part together, and doubtless discussing passing events in life and politics with interest and ability. Such a set is not very common at Oxford, living as it does a good deal apart from both games and work: but it does exist, and somehow includes men of much intellectual power which bears fruit later.

“On Rhodes’ return to Oxford to take his degree (I have not the date—probably when he was about twenty-seven years of age) [it was in 1883—Ed.] he was then a growing power at Kimberley, and was about to be elected member for the diamond-fields in the Cape Parliament. When he joined us in common room after dinner there was much talk about African

politics, and he spoke with a clearness and vigour which greatly interested us. He explained how 'the racial question between Dutch and English was the greatest problem of the hour out there, and how he meant to do all he could to mediate between the two.' Later on¹ again, when he had been Premier, just after the conquest of Matabeleland, he visited Oriel with Dr Jameson, and when asked how soon he was going to build his college at the Cape, which he proposed to erect himself on the model of his old college, he said 'he could not do it yet, because Hofmeyer would not like it, as it would interfere with a Dutch college established somewhere up country.'

"This was, of course, shortly before the raid, made, as he has lately stated, not against the Boers, but against Krugerism."

Such are the recollections of Rhodes in his college days as supplied by Mr Butler, and a few comments on these may be made before passing on. Mr Butler seems to be slightly incorrect when he states that it was not until Rhodes was compelled to return to South Africa in 1874 through a chill that he became connected with the diamond-fields. This chill was caught, as Mr Butler states, while rowing, and very nearly proved fatal; indeed, had it not been for the dry, pure, and invigorating air of Kimberley, to which Mr Rhodes returned in the nick of time, the illness must almost inevitably have taken a fatal turn. As it was, it was a very narrow escape indeed. At this time,

¹ The occasion of his visit, in company with Dr Jameson, was in 1894, when he was sworn of the Privy Council and a C.B. was awarded to Dr Jameson, for their efforts in bringing the Matabele war to a successful conclusion.

however, Mr Rhodes had been connected with the diamond industry in South Africa for nearly three years, and the only change which occurred then was that he took over ten claims instead of the one he had previously held, and which had been jointly worked by his brother and himself. About this time Herbert Rhodes tired of the diamond-fields, and decided to push on farther north into unknown lands.

The statement which Rhodes made in 1883, that he should endeavour to stamp out the racial feeling between Boers and British in South Africa, has been amply borne out by his later actions; and his recent discrimination between the Boers and the Kruger coterie, though patent and easy to understand, seems either to be totally disregarded by his opponents or is declared to be nothing but a distinction without a difference. This is a question, however, which we will deal with more fully later.

The reminiscences of the Rev. A. L. Barnes-Lawrence, M.A., can now be passed to with the mention that this gentleman was one of those who formed Mr Rhodes' immediate circle of friends at Oxford.

II. *The Rev. A. L. Barnes-Lawrence writes:—*

“ It has always seemed to me that confidences between boys at school and between young men at college—innocent and honourable though they may have been—ought not to be exposed in after-life to that fierce light which beats upon a throne. I may be allowed, however, to express in general terms the interest which I felt in Mr Rhodes at that time, and which naturally enough has increased as time has gone on.

“ It is a little difficult in the retrospect to dis-

associate the Cecil Rhodes of the present day from one's view of him then ; and just because it is so easy to be wise after the event, there is need of caution lest, after the events which have taken place since the undergraduate became a public man, we should imagine that we had been wise enough to have discerned in that undergraduate those germs of ability which have developed into greatness in after-life. There were men among our contemporaries and friends concerning whom it would not have been difficult to predict that, if health and opportunity were theirs, they would be likely to be heard of in a world which is some degrees larger than Oxford. But Mr Rhodes no doubt will agree with me that if he personally felt, as young men are apt to feel, that he had it in him to be, or to do, something great, he did not betray his secret or, as the modern phrase is, 'give himself away.' I think we all liked Rhodes because he was natural and unaffected ; but he was reserved about his own private affairs, and I can recollect that, notwithstanding a certain coldness of speech and manner which betokened an unconventional attitude towards things in general and towards the university in particular, there was an evident anxiety on his part to conform to college rules and university regulations. His experience of life had been more varied than that of the ordinary public schoolboy coming straight from school life to the university ; and I think we sometimes tried to draw from him some revelation of that experience—much in the same way as the Lord High Chancellor, in a speech at the Oriel Commemoration Dinner in 1899, gave expression to the general wish that Mr Rhodes, who was present with us, should make a speech, and added, 'If only Mr Rhodes chose

to open his mouth, what secrets he could tell us in connection with that South African problem which confronts us.'

" I daresay in those earlier days Mr Rhodes could have told us something about South Africa, and no doubt did tell us something, for I remember how, in the hearts of some of us, he stirred some spirit of adventure and some longing to go over some of the ground which he had even then traversed, and to penetrate into regions which were only dimly visible to us then under the halo of romance.

" Just a quarter of a century later, in talking with me about those old times, Rhodes has told me that even then he was fired with an ambition to advance the boundaries of civilisation by extending the British Empire to the regions beyond ; and it was deeply interesting to me to hear him say how much he had always felt indebted to the educational course at Oxford, which had cleared his vision, fixed his aim, stimulated his enthusiasm, and sustained him in his after-life amid the thousand difficulties which beset him in the pursuit of his ideal. These phrases are perhaps mine rather than his, but they represent accurately what he intended to convey with reference to his indebtedness to the university and to his old college.

" As far as my recollection goes, Rhodes' knowledge of classical literature was only elementary ; but he struggled manfully with the Latin and Greek which lay between him and the pass degree at which he aimed, and was not above asking questions from friends or tutors to elucidate the text or the point to be solved. In his attitude towards most questions and difficulties he was decidedly philosophic, and it is

my belief that, like some other men at that time, he worked at his books a great deal harder than he appeared to do, and more than he would have cared to admit.

"One or two incidents of undergraduate life I may be allowed to record, quite trivial in themselves and only interesting in the light of these later days. We were walking along the 'High'—Rhodes and I and another—when a proctor appeared coming towards us at a pace which betokened business and accompanied by his 'bulldogs.' At once we became supremely conscious of the fact that we were without caps and gowns, which at that hour of the evening, though not criminal, was a statutable offence and punishable by a fine. What was to be done? The proctor with his satellites was still some little distance from us, but to have turned and fled would have resulted in instant chase, and would have been an aggravation of the offence. Our companion, however, taking advantage of a side-street, instantly turned down it, and then, being out of the proctor's sight, took to his heels and disappeared.

"'Look here,' said Rhodes to me; 'these fellows won't know me, as I am only just up and am in lodgings, so you make off without any hurry-scurry and I'll meet them.' Decision and action necessarily were simultaneous. With a friendly wave of the hand, I strode off in the direction of my college, and as I turned a corner and looked back, one glance showed me a group of which Mr Rhodes and the proctor were the central figures, the two 'bulldogs' standing around.

"Next day, of course, we compared notes. I had won the shelter of Oriel without difficulty, and how

had Rhodes fared? ‘Oh, gloriously!’ he said. ‘It was such fun! The proctor took off his cap to me with the utmost politeness, and I did the same to him. “Well, sir,” said the proctor to me, “your name and college?” “My name is Rhodes,” replied C. R., “and I have come here from the Cape of Good Hope, and I am making a short stay in Oxford; and now, sir, may I ask your name and college?”’ Rhodes was right in supposing that neither proctor nor ‘bulldogs’ would know him. The proctor apologised for what he supposed to be his mistake, and again with much show of politeness he and the Oriel undergraduate parted, and next day Rhodes nearly died of laughter in relating the success of his manœuvre to me.

“At dinner we usually sat next each other, and one night I remember that I felt compelled to act decisively in a matter of a most unusual kind, and received from him moral support such as I felt thankful to obtain. It was a case of an undergraduate expressing his opinion of some very excellent persons, and using language about them of a very gross character; and to add to the horror of it, these persons thus reviled were the young man’s own father and mother, with whom I happened to be acquainted. I was so filled with indignation that I told the culprit that if he uttered another word of the kind, he subsequently would receive the severest thrashing he had ever experienced in his life. A dead silence instantly ensued, for of course my warning was almost as unparliamentary as the language which had provoked it. Then some one said to me, ‘Don’t be so warm about it,’ to which I replied that ‘on no account would I tolerate such

language at the dinner-table,' &c. At this juncture Rhodes seized me by the arm and said, 'Why! you are a regular Briton!' and then, turning to the offender, added, 'You have heard what Barnes-Lawrence has said, and if you give us any more talk of that kind we will all have to give you a thrashing, so you had better hold your tongue.' And hold his tongue he did. The cheerful way in which Rhodes thus intervened and restored the *status quo* remained in my memory, as also did his expression about 'a regular Briton,' which incidentally serves to show that even at that time his acquaintance with South Africa had accustomed him to a comparison between Briton and anything un-English, or, as we have learned to say nowadays, between Briton and Boer.

"I cannot remember that Mr Rhodes took any active part in our college sports, though there was much keenness then to get any man who could do anything in rowing, cricket, football, or athletics to represent the college worthily against all outsiders. He could handle an oar, and we have rowed together; but notwithstanding that he was active-limbed and rather big and well-proportioned, there was a delicacy of constitution which prohibited him from taking part in any violent exercises; and he did not present then that massive appearance to which we are accustomed to-day, and to which a lady bore eloquent testimony upon the occasion of Mr Rhodes taking his honorary D.C.L. degree in 1899. He was standing in front of the vice-chancellor in the Sheldonian Theatre, shoulder to shoulder with Lord Kitchener, who was recipient of the same degree, and the cheering of the immense concourse of privileged persons who were present quite prevented Dr Shadwell of Oriel

College, who filled the office of public orator, from proceeding with his introductory address, and it was then that a lady who was close to me exclaimed ecstatically, 'Oh, don't they just look like two great pillars of the Empire!'

"It is difficult after a lapse of years to add more to this fragmentary notice of Mr Rhodes as he appeared to me in his undergraduate days, for he resided out of college and did not keep full terms. But it is pleasant to find that the genial man of those days, notwithstanding all the stress and strain of the unique experiences of his later life, has preserved his sense of good comradeship in his intercourse with college friends.

"The last words I heard him utter before he returned to South Africa to be back, as he said, before the war broke out, were words which every college don in every college and in every university would do well to take note of as some encouragement to them in labours which are not confined to giving lectures and coaching men for their examinations. 'I may have made some mistakes in life,' said Mr Rhodes, 'and I can only hope that I have been forgiven; but whatever difficulties and troubles I may meet with in the future, I shall always feel that I shall be able to turn to my old college with the certainty of receiving just the comfort and advice I may need.'"

In other portions of the book it will be found necessary from time to time to refer to this instructive narrative of Mr Barnes-Lawrence.

CHAPTER IV.

ENTRANCE INTO POLITICAL LIFE.

IT was in Kimberley, between the years 1873 and 1881, that Mr Rhodes by his successful speculation in diamond mines began to amass the wealth without which his political career on the lines he had mapped out for himself would have been impossible.

Exactly when it was that the idea of British expansion in Africa first came to him it is impossible to say ; but it must have been very soon after he first reached Kimberley, or New Rush, as that town was called for the first few years of its existence. In those days Rhodes was essentially a “dreamer of dreams.” The glamour of Africa, which has at different times cast its spell over such mighty minds as Cambyses and Napoleon Bonaparte, had seized hold of the grey-eyed, delicate English lad. Unlike most dreamers, however, Rhodes was gifted with the power to materialise his visions. His character, in truth, is a strange blend. On the one side is the thoughtful student and philosopher imagining big schemes ; and on the other is the cool-headed financial genius who can provide the means whereby the great schemes evolved by the other side of his character are rendered possible.

From the very first Rhodes seems to have been con-

vinced of the future of South Africa ; but he recognised that for it to assume its proper place among the States of the world the scattered fragments which then existed must be welded into a coherent whole. This, together with the bringing of the then unknown interior under civilised control, was the task to which he set himself, and he has devoted himself to it for nearly thirty years. "That is my dream," he once said, drawing his hand across the map of Africa, "that all red." He foresaw that some day or other the South African states must be federated, and he was determined in his own mind that when this federation came about the states should form a portion of the British Empire. From this object, the federation of the states of South Africa under British control, and the extension of the British Empire northwards through Africa, he has never wavered. This, in a sentence, has been the lifework of Cecil Rhodes.

Having at length found a definite object in life to which to devote himself, Rhodes with characteristic energy set about his colossal task of expanding and consolidating the British Empire in Africa. His well-balanced mind, however, enabled him to see that it was of no use to attempt the erection of the keystone of his edifice before he had laid the foundation. The preliminary steps to be taken were two. The first was the possession of sufficient wealth to enable him to accomplish his purpose ; the second, a position of authority in the administration of Cape Colony. It was thus that very early in his life he decided to enter upon a political career—before he had left Oxford, in fact ; but he recognised that even more important, if he was to bring his ideas to fruition, than a seat in the

Cape Assembly was the possession of great wealth. As he remarked a few years later to General Gordon, "It is no use having big ideas if one has not the money to carry them out."

For money as money Rhodes has never cared the slightest. It was only for the power which the control of wealth brings with it that Rhodes strove to become a millionaire. To-day, though he is, as he himself has stated, a millionaire ten times over, he probably spends less upon himself than a good many of those in his employ. Had it only been for the luxuries which money buys, Rhodes would never have worked early and late to obtain it. But, as has just been said, a large capital at his command was the first step towards the accomplishment of his ideas, and therefore he devoted himself to the task of making money with that dogged earnestness and concentration of energy which had previously carried him triumphantly through so many difficulties at school and college.

In 1874 the laws controlling the diamond-fields were revised so as to permit a person to hold ten claims instead of the one which had previously been the limit. Rhodes promptly took advantage of this to buy up nine of the most promising claims in the neighbourhood. A short time afterwards this law also was abolished, and one man could hold an indefinite number of claims on certain conditions.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Herbert Rhodes tired of the diamond-fields about this time, and quitted Kimberley to enter upon the more congenial *rôle* of hunter, explorer, and gold-seeker in the interior. Left to himself, Cecil quickly contracted four friendships which have been of great benefit to

him and are maintained to this day. These were with C. D. Rudd (who, like Rhodes, had been compelled to leave school and visit South Africa owing to a breakdown in his health), Rochefort Maguire, Alfred Beit, and Dr L. S. Jameson. The first-named became in a short time Rhodes' partner, and they embarked upon many speculations together. In addition to buying and working several diamond claims, they tendered for and obtained the contract to pump out a mine which had been flooded by a waterspout. This meant the importation of hydraulic machinery from England, but in the end Rhodes and Rudd were amply repaid for their enterprise. They also erected a refrigerating plant to supply the town with ice during the hot weather, and made large profits out of it. Rhodes had set himself to make a fortune in the shortest possible time, and anything that tended to hasten that consummation was welcomed by him, and in all his efforts he was willingly seconded by his youthful partner. He found that his mining claims were giving very good results, and he soon became known as one of the ablest speculators in claims in or around Kimberley. Everything he took up seemed to turn out well.

A short and cursory description of the Kimberley diamond mines and their methods of working may not be out of place here. The diamondiferous earth occurs in two forms, and is thought to be of volcanic origin. The upper layer, which in some cases comes up to the surface of the land, is a soft clay of a yellowish colour, and underneath it is a harder clay of a dark blue tint. It is in this second layer that the bulk of the diamonds is found. To-day the mines are being worked down to a considerable depth, as much as 1200 feet in places,

by means of vertical and incline shafts and horizontal galleries or "drives," in much the same manner as is adopted in a gold mine or a coal mine.

Some of the mines, however, are open, and resemble great pits of the nature of a stone quarry. Prominent among these open mines is the famous Wesselton property, from which diamonds to the value of over twelve millions sterling have been taken in less than thirty years. There is a story that when the "diamond boom" first set in, the land on which this mine is situated was offered for sale for £50 and found no buyer. The Wesselton mine has a circumference round the top of the pit of over a quarter of a mile, and is fenced in with row upon row of barbed wire to prevent outsiders having access to the small army of Kafirs engaged in hewing out the solid masses of blue earth. A striking feature of this mine is the network of wire ropeways for hauling small trucks filled with earth to the summit.

The present method of treating the earth is to bring it to the surface, and leave it exposed to the action of the sun for a few months in some carefully protected spot; and then, when it shows signs of crumbling, it is broken into small fragments, and passed through a crushing-machine which reduces the earth to a fine powder. A stream of water is next directed across it, and this washes the earth away through very fine sieves, leaving the diamonds behind.

Such are the modern methods of diamond-mining; but in the early days of small groups of claims, and when the diamondiferous earth lay nearer the surface, the working was carried out in more primitive fashion. A small shaft was sunk into the "blue

ground," and the earth was hoisted to the surface by means of a bucket and windlass. It was then immediately pounded into gravel by the workmen under the watchful eye of the owner, on the alert to see that none of the stones was appropriated by the natives, and emptied into small hand-sieves and water run through it. This done, the diamonds were sorted out from the residue, and weighed and tested.

A stranger landing in Kimberley in those days, and seeing Rhodes in his shirt-sleeves seated on an upturned bucket sorting with keen eyes the diamonds from the gravel on an improvised table in the open air, or reading a text-book for his next examination at Oxford with one eye on the volume and the other on his native workmen, would have found it hard to believe that in this man the destinies of South Africa were virtually bound up. To all appearances he seemed to have no other object in life than his books and the successful working of his diamond claims.

Among the population of Kimberley there were few, if any, outside his little circle of intimates who could understand Rhodes. All recognised in him a very successful speculator, and one whom it was impossible to get the best of in a bargain, and therefore he received a certain amount of respect; but they could not follow or sympathise with the intricate working of his mind. They set him down as eccentric and "queer." Among his friends, however, his abilities were appreciated, and Dr Jameson has placed on record that at a very early stage in their acquaintance-ship, which dates from 1878, he realised that "for sheer natural power he had never met a man to come near Cecil Rhodes." Rhodes further possessed the

power of convincing his auditors that what at first seemed to be his wildest and most visionary schemes were well within the bounds of possibility, and that he had within him the gifts necessary to bring those schemes into actual being.

Rhodes and Jameson for many years shared a small bachelor establishment at Kimberley, and were very close friends. The young Scottish doctor quickly succumbed, as most persons do who are brought into close contact with him, to Rhodes' masterful personality, and became a willing follower under his banner.

Towards the year 1880 Rhodes decided that he was making money at a rate which would justify him in going a step forward towards the materialisation of his ambitions. He decided, therefore, upon entering the political world of South Africa. In October of this year the district of Griqualand West, which had until that time existed as a separate colony under a lieutenant-governor, was formally annexed to Cape Colony, and Rhodes was elected a member of the Cape House of Assembly for the district of Barkly West, near Kimberley, a constituency for which he has sat ever since.

About the time that Rhodes first entered the House of Assembly he met with very severe domestic afflictions. On February 25, 1878, his father, who had been in failing health for some time previously, died at Fairlight Place, Hastings, whither he had gone for the benefit of the sea-air. In September 1879 his eldest brother, Herbert, was burnt to death on the banks of the Shiré river. A mystery has always hung over this incident, but the facts seem to be as follows: Herbert Rhodes and his party of natives

had been tracking elephants all day across the plains of Nyassaland, and darkness found them at the Shiré river. Here it was decided to halt for the night, and a small wooden hut was hastily built for the hunter. After supper Rhodes turned in, and a large fire was lit near his hut to keep the lions and other prowlers of the jungle away from the camp. It was probably a spark from this fire that caught the hut, which blazed like so much tinder, and the unfortunate young fellow was literally roasted to death. The sight of the hut on fire terrified his native followers, who fled in all directions, screaming with terror. Had they stood their ground and attempted to master the flames, it is possible that Herbert Rhodes might have escaped with nothing worse than a severe burning.

In addition to becoming a member of the Cape House of Assembly, Rhodes about this time gave evidence of his increasing power in other directions. The scheme for the amalgamation of all the diamond mines around Kimberley into one great corporation, which should control the output and so ensure the prices remaining at a high level, took possession of him at this period, and little by little he moved towards this end.

The many diamond mines being exploited around Kimberley, and the large and unrestricted annual output, had the effect of diminishing appreciably the value of the stones, and a "glut" in the market was threatened. It was to prevent the further lowering of prices, and to ensure the supply of diamonds being somewhat less than the demand, that this idea of the amalgamation of the various companies and proprietors first occurred to Rhodes, as it had occurred to many others about this time.

After nearly thirteen years of hard work on the part of Rhodes and his supporters, this amalgamation was accomplished in 1888. The effect was immediate. The supply of diamonds was regulated in accordance with the demand, and the further decrease of prices prevented. The consolidation also had the effect of checking and decreasing the population of Kimberley; one portion of the town almost immediately fell into decay. One great corporation, howsoever many men it may find employment for, must need much less labour than, say, twenty smaller concerns, each possessing separate and distinct staffs. Many of the miners of Kimberley, who found their occupation in the same condition as that of Othello, betook themselves to other parts of South Africa, principally to the Transvaal, to prospect for gold and other precious metals.

As has been said, it was about 1875 that the idea of amalgamation first occurred to Rhodes, and in 1888 he saw his efforts in this direction crowned with success and the diamond industry of South Africa under the control of the De Beers Consolidated Mines, Limited. For thirteen years he had plodded along towards the goal he had marked out, and had not suffered himself to be turned from it by any obstacle; and in the end he achieved his object. Naturally of an impatient and petulant disposition, Rhodes has a singular tenacity of purpose.

Rhodes made his first speech in the House of Assembly at Cape Town on April 19, 1881, when he was a little under twenty-eight years of age, and three months after the defeat of the British forces on Majuba Hill. The subject of this speech was the attempted general disarmament of the Basuto tribe

by the Cape authorities, which had led to a revolt in that tribe and to severe fighting. Rhodes was much opposed to this disarmament of the natives. He recognised that without their weapons the tribes dwelling on the Transvaal frontier were incapable of defending themselves against Boer aggression. Something like four millions sterling had been spent by the Cape Government in attempting to quell this revolt, but with very little result, for the natives held their own against any force which the Colonial Government could send against them. Worse than the monetary loss incurred, as Mr Rhodes pointed out in a later speech, was the fact that a native tribe should be able successfully to defy the might of what claimed to be the paramount authority of South Africa. The Cape Government was at length glad to refer the whole question of the disarmament to the arbitration of the High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson. It was a pitiful business, terribly mismanaged from beginning to end.

Rhodes' maiden speech was short and not very important; but a week later he spoke at greater length, and with more effect, on the disarmament of the Basutos. In this speech he denounced the disarmament in vigorous terms. He likened it to "the greased cartridges in the Indian Mutiny." He urged also that the settlement of Basutoland should be left to the mother country, holding that Cape Colony, with its sparse and widely scattered white population, could not afford to extend its territories any farther. "Look at it on practical grounds," he said. "Are we a great and independent South Africa? No; we are only the population of a third-rate English city spread over a great country. The colony has under-

taken enormous public works, and in addition has to face the burden of the defence of the country. There seem to be certain overtures made to us from the mother country, as if the Home Government were inclined to take over the native territories. There will probably be a new native territory formed out of the Transvaal settlement, and there is Natal, taking all which together the Imperial Government could have a compact and important black settlement under its sway. Can we afford," he continued, "to go on spending an amount on defence which is equivalent to England spending 200 millions sterling a-year? England would not let any feeling of pride force her to spend such an amount as that every year, nor should we."

This sensible and business-like speech, made by Rhodes at the very outset of his career, combats the absurd statement, so often repeated by his enemies, that he is merely a senseless land-grabber and expansionist, who pounces on territory with incredible greed and without a thought of the responsibilities which the control of large tracts of country involve.

The days when Rhodes entered the Cape Parliament were momentous in the history of South Africa. The Burghers of the Transvaal had successfully defied the might of Great Britain. They had repulsed the British troops at Laing's Nek, and had totally defeated them at Majuba. To add to the misery of it, the British Government, instead of standing firm, had scuttled and run before the rifles of the victorious Transvalers. They were dark times for British influence in South Africa, and correspondingly times of great jubilation for the Boers of the Transvaal. With splendid audacity Paul Kruger,

who had by this time succeeded Burgers as President of the Transvaal, determined to push forth the borders of his republic in every direction, though his exchequer virtually was empty. He, too, realised the importance of having the control of the interior.

Thus commenced the duel between Kruger and Rhodes, which was destined to last for so many years and to undergo so many changes and fluctuations.

As has been mentioned above, the Transvaal treasury was almost entirely depleted, and that State could not have met its liabilities had it been pressed to do so: nevertheless Kruger determined to pursue his policy of expansion to the utmost limits. His aim was the same as that of Rhodes—a federated South Africa from Cape Town to the Zambesi; but the objects of the two apostles of expansion were very different. It has become the habit of many writers to refer to the Boer supporters of Kruger's expansion movement as freebooters and filibusters. If this is correct, then those who advocated British expansion must come into the same category. The interior and the native states were open to all: it was clear that the natives could not continue to govern themselves regardless of the march of civilisation and the spread of white colonisation, and the Boers had as much right to aim at being the paramount Power in South Africa as we had.

It is when the principles which underlay the schemes of Kruger and of Rhodes are analysed that one sees which of the two was the true friend of South Africa, and that the sympathies of every impartial thinker are given to Rhodes. His aim was the federation of South Africa into a harmonious whole under the British flag, but with full rights and liberty for all,

British and Dutch alike, and with humane regulations for the natives and a due respect for native laws and customs, so far as they did not tend to the further demoralisation of the tribes. Kruger's aim, on the other hand, was for a Dutch hegemony in which the Boers should be the masters, and all other races, white and coloured, vassals and slaves, permitted to dwell in the country only so long as they did not interfere with the government of it and claimed no more rights than the Dutch rulers were willing to give them. But to call the Boers freebooters because they attempted to enlarge their territories, and to laud up to the skies the English pioneers of expansion, is to overstep the mark.

Had the Dutch aim been to consolidate the government of South Africa into a concrete and enlightened group of states, and to afford a fair field for all colonists, irrespective of race, and without placing galling restrictions on one portion of the people for the benefit of the other, their idea would have been almost identical with Mr Rhodes' aspirations, and there would only have been questions of detail to contend about. Rhodes has ever upheld the supremacy of Great Britain, while the Dutch of the Transvaal and the Free State wished for complete independence from this country. That would have been the principal point at issue.

Mr Kruger's aims, however, had nothing of this free character in them, and therefore his scheme for a United South Africa is to be condemned. A wiser man than Kruger, and one less stubborn, would have realised in 1881 the unsoundness of the attitude he had assumed in his relations with Great Britain; but the victories he had gained in the field, and the weak-

ness of the British Government, caused him to think that South Africa lay at his feet, and that the days of British supremacy in that part of the world had passed by for ever. Fortunately, the man who alone has shown himself able to cope with the methods of Kruger and his clique had entered the Cape House of Assembly, and was already watching the Transvaal President closely, preparing to oppose him so far as lay in his power, and to maintain the principles of progress and enlightenment against those of retrogression and conservatism.

At the close of the Basuto war Rhodes was appointed a member of the Commission of the Cape Parliament to proceed to Basutoland to decide what compensation was to be paid to those natives who had remained loyal to the Cape during the revolt, and had suffered in consequence. It was while serving on this Commission that he met General Gordon, who had proceeded to Basutoland to arrange conditions of peace. Gordon from the first was greatly attracted by Rhodes' personality, and the two men, so dissimilar in many respects but at one in their intense patriotism, soon became great friends. They had something in common in their natures—chiefly, perhaps, a supreme confidence in their own abilities and a fondness for having their own way. “You always contradict me,” said Gordon to Rhodes one day when they were out together. “I never saw such a man for his own opinion; you think you are always right and every one else is wrong.” There was perhaps a slight exaggeration in this remark; but confidence in his own opinions has from his earliest days been a leading trait in Rhodes' character. Yet, despite their occasional differences of

opinion, the two men got on very well together; and when at length the work of the Compensation Commission was completed, and Rhodes was preparing to return to Kimberley to superintend once more the working of his diamond mines, Gordon extended to him a pressing invitation to stay and assist him in his work of pacifying the Basutos and resettling the country. Rhodes, however, saw that to do this would mean that he must turn aside from the path he had mapped out for himself, and he declined to stay, though not without some reluctance and hesitation.

Another public work which was occupying a great deal of his attention at this time was the proposed railway line to Kimberley from the south. He strongly urged upon the Cape Government the construction of such a line, because, in the first place, he saw that great benefit would accrue to the diamond-fields through such a line, and, in the next, because he recognised that a line to Kimberley might in course of time be extended farther north towards that great country which even then he had his eyes on.

In one way and another Rhodes had now thoroughly embarked upon his political career, and was rapidly making his way into the front rank of the public men of South Africa.

CHAPTER V.

SAVING THE ROUTE TO THE NORTH.

FAIRLY embarked upon his political career, Mr Rhodes devoted the whole of his energies to the attainment of his great object of the expansion and consolidation of the British Empire in South Africa. From the day he made his first speech in the House of Assembly some of its members recognised in him a man of no mean ability, who would, if he devoted himself seriously to politics, make his mark. Few, however, imagined the heights to which the young politician would so quickly rise.

There were many matters of importance before the Cape House of Assembly at this time, to all of which Rhodes gave his share of attention. Prominent among them was a proposal to introduce Dutch into the House as the official language side by side with English. This was one of the first ways in which the Dutch community of Cape Colony showed how the triumph of the Transvaal Boers over the British had awakened their racial ambitions and brought about a feeling something akin to contempt for the British colonists and everything appertaining to them.

Mr Rhodes was opposed to this measure, and seconded an amendment moved by Mr Fuller to

defer the consideration of the matter. His motives for so doing were fully explained in a speech which he delivered in the House on the subject. He had not the slightest objection to the Dutch-speaking members being allowed to address the House in their own tongue; only, he desired to have an assurance from the Dutch inhabitants of the colony generally that they wished for this change. He considered also that so important a matter should not have been introduced at so late a period in the session, when many members were away and unable to give their opinions one way or the other.

Rhodes' policy from the first day he entered political life has been to conciliate, in every way possible, the Dutch or Afrikander element, for he realised that to achieve his ambitions he must work with, and through, the Dutch. For many years after he entered the Cape Parliament, he was prepared also to work amicably with the Boers of the Transvaal, on condition that they were his allies and not his masters. "Equality" has ever been Rhodes' watch-word; and he would have welcomed any move on the part of President Kruger to assist him in bringing about that consolidation of South Africa which he so desired. Such assistance must have been rendered, however, on the understanding that there were to be equal privileges for both races alike. He was prepared to give the Dutch the same freedom that he claimed for the British; but he expected the Dutch on their part to act in the same manner. The person who fails to grasp this fundamental condition in Rhodes' lifework will, of necessity, fail to understand the motives underlying it.

At this period the Afrikander spirit was very

strong in Cape Colony. The Afrikander Bond was established in 1882, and was not long before it made its influence felt in the Cape House of Assembly and throughout South Africa generally. The object of the Bond, as stated by its founders, was to unite the Dutch or Afrikander element into a conglomerate whole for political purposes. It further professed "to recognise no nationality whatever beyond that of the Afrikanders, regarding as such all, of whatever origin, who promised to work within the limits of its constitution for the wellbeing of South Africa." Notwithstanding this profession of impartiality, and the fact that many of British descent joined the Bond, its aims almost from the first have been retrogressive and anti-British. Mr Hofmeyr was one of the principal organisers of the Bond, and has ever since retained the controlling power. Despite his intimacy with the Afrikander section, and his policy of conciliating the Dutch settlers, Mr Rhodes has never been a member of the Bond, preferring, as he has explained, to maintain his complete independence of thought and action.

In Kimberley, which has really been his South African home, Rhodes was a growing power. His extraordinary skill in finance and his success on the diamond-fields had brought him into prominence, and the first important speech on public affairs which he made in the town set the seal on his political fame. Rumours had reached Kimberley of Rhodes' successful *début* in the House of Assembly, and when it became known that he was to address a meeting in the "city of diamonds" on the question of the disarmament of the Basutos and the extension of the railway to Kimberley from the south, much interest

was aroused. On the night of the meeting the hall was crowded, and many were unable to gain admittance. Rhodes was only one of several speakers, and his turn did not come until late in the evening. When at length it did arrive, he quickly seized the attention of the cosmopolitan audience, and held it with a grip which never relaxed until he sat down again.

Cecil Rhodes possesses in a marked degree that rare magnetism which compels even those who differ most strongly from him to listen with interest to his arguments and to feel a certain amount of respect, if not of sympathy, for his attitude. He is, however, not an orator in any sense of the word, and it is curious that one so unconventional in his manner of speaking should be able to attract the attention and interest which he invariably commands. In place of polished oratory, such as distinguished John Bright or Mr Gladstone, there is an easy colloquial style and a facility for putting the crux of any subject into a few terse, sharp sentences. As one of his auditors remarked after Rhodes had made a long speech at a general meeting of the British South Africa Company in London, "He doesn't make a speech at all. He gets up and has a sort of a confidential chat with the chairman for the benefit of those who happen to be listening." His abrupt, jerky style, it may be added, has made him the terror of shorthand reporters, who find some difficulty in following his alternate halts and very quick dashes of speech.

To revert to his first speech at Kimberley: he put before his mixed audience, in that concise and homely form of speech which he has made his own, his

attitude with regard to the two questions at issue, and, metaphorically, tore the existing Colonial Government of Mr (afterwards Sir) Gordon Sprigg to rags. When he drew to a close and resumed his seat he was greeted with a perfect storm of applause, and had, further, the satisfaction of afterwards learning that he had converted more than one prominent townsman to his way of thinking. His speech was, by common consent, the best of the evening; from that night his political position on the diamond-fields was assured, and almost immediately he assumed in the Cape House of Assembly the position of spokesman for Kimberley and district, which he has maintained right away down to the present day.

Mr Rhodes' chief work at this time, 1881-82, was the question of the boundaries of Griqualand West. This question, he saw, bore closely on the very object which had led him to enter upon a political career — the British expansion to the north; therefore he devoted considerable attention to the matter. It was found that under the award of Mr Keate, which had placed Griqualand West under the administration of this country, an error had been made in the survey by which several farms belonging to an independent chief named Mankoroane had been unwittingly included in the territory of Griqualand West. Mr Rhodes brought this fact to the notice of the House of Assembly in May 1882, and succeeded in obtaining the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the matter and to decide what should be done.

He was himself selected as one of the Commission, which set off for the disputed territory almost as soon

as it was appointed. Here it was found that there were some seventy farms on the territory in question, and that they were occupied entirely by Boers from the Transvaal who had set up the quasi-republic of Stellaland. These Boers, though this fact was not suspected at the time either by Mr Rhodes or by any other member of the Cape Assembly, save, possibly, Mr Hofmeyr and other leaders of the Afrikander Bond, were in reality emissaries of President Kruger, sent for the express purpose of seizing the trade-route from Cape Colony to the interior. Kruger's object at this time was undoubtedly to build a wall, as it were, of Boer territory which should stretch from Delagoa Bay on the east to beyond Lake 'Ngami on the west, and so shut off Cape Colony from any intercourse with the vast hinterland.

Mr Rhodes was almost alone in recognising the importance of keeping this trade-route through Griqualand West and Bechuanaland under British control. He had no idea, however, of the formidable opponent he had in the background, nor did he realise it until after he had visited Stellaland. At this time, in fact, he was fighting with Kruger in the dark.

After examining the territory and carefully turning the matter over in his mind, Rhodes decided that it was almost impossible to restore the territory to Mankoroane, for that would merely mean that it would become the undisputed property of the Stellaland Boers; therefore he determined to obtain, if possible, a formal cession of the territory in question from Mankoroane himself. In this he was successful. The chief saw that, if he did not hand over the land to British protection, the Boers would wrench it from him by force, and he chose the lesser of the

two evils. So as to justify his action further, Rhodes set about obtaining signatures to a petition from the dwellers on the farms in the disputed territory, asking that they might be annexed to the Cape. The Stellalanders were at first unwilling to do this, but in the end they were brought round to see things in the same light as Rhodes. Thus armed with authority from both the native owners of the land and the white dwellers in the country, he returned to Cape Town in high spirits at the successful conclusion of the task he had set himself.

He never dreamed for a moment that the Colonial Government would hesitate to assume the control of the territory, especially as it had so long been regarded as a part of Griqualand West; but, as events proved, he had not correctly gauged the feeling of the House. Mr Hofmeyr and his friends of the Bond party regarded the whole of the interior of South Africa, beyond the existing limits of Cape Colony and Natal, as the rightful heritage of the Boers, and therefore strongly opposed the ratification of the concession which Mr Rhodes had gained from Mankoroane. Several other members of the House, while not sharing this extreme view, were nervous of undertaking further responsibilities until the financial condition of the colony was in a sounder state than was the case at that moment. It was in vain that Mr Rhodes pointed out to the House the value —nay, the positive necessity—of the colony controlling the trade-route to the interior. The opposing forces were too strong for him, and he was perforce compelled to retire from the struggle, baffled and disheartened.

After considering the matter for a short time, he

determined upon a very bold step. He would write to the Imperial Government, and urge it to assume the control of this strip of territory independently of the Cape Government. Lord Derby was Colonial Secretary at this time, and though he was in many ways one of the weakest and most vacillating ministers who have ever held that appointment, yet he saw a certain amount of truth in Rhodes' arguments, and was in the end persuaded so far as to obtain the consent of the Imperial Government to a protectorate being established over the territory in question, on condition that the Cape Government paid one-half of the annual sum necessary for its administration.

Elated by this measure of success, Rhodes returned to the Cape Ministry and placed this offer before them, urging its acceptance with all the powers of persuasion at his command. This time some of those who had previously opposed the scheme for annexation on account of the cost veered round and favoured the proposal for a joint-administration. The opposition, however, was still too strong, and the Cape Government declined finally to bear any share in the cost of administering the territory in question. Thereupon the Imperial authorities notified Mr Rhodes that, so far as they were concerned, the incident was closed.

Rhodes now retired to Kimberley disgusted with the short-sightedness of his fellow-members. The trade-route to the north had apparently passed out of British hands for all time, and the Boers of the Transvaal seemed destined to become the paramount Power of South Africa. This was undoubtedly the blackest period of Mr Rhodes' whole political career, not even

excepting those dark days after the failure of the Jameson Raid; for it seemed as though his ambitions for British expansion northwards across Africa were finally nipped in the bud, and that there was no need for him to follow his political career further. He dropped politics entirely for a time, and devoted himself exclusively to forwarding the amalgamation movement among the diamond companies.

His visit to Stellaland had opened Rhodes' eyes to the fact that the Boers who had settled in that country and in other parts of Bechuanaland were not, as had previously been supposed, isolated parties of freebooters and adventurers, but were all controlled by a master-hand, President Kruger, who was as fully bent on holding the key to the interior as was Rhodes himself. The more he thought over this, the more convinced was he that his surmise was correct; and, as he has since stated, he could not refrain from admiring the tactics of the Transvaal President in his daring policy, which he contrasted bitterly with the blind parochialism at that time prevailing in the Cape Parliament.

The gods, however, seemed to be fighting for Rhodes at this time. There was a sudden *volte-face* on the part of the Imperial Government, which, at the very time that it seemed to have slipped completely from his grasp, brought the control of the route from the Cape to the interior once more within the range of probability.

This change of attitude on the part of the home Government was really brought about by the unexpected action of Germany in annexing the huge slice of territory around Walfish Bay now known as German South-West Africa. It was Germany's first move towards

the acquisition of a colonial empire, and everything points to the fact that Prince Bismarck had a hand in it. The British Government seems to have been completely ignorant of Germany's intentions in this matter until a few days before the annexation was actually proclaimed; and then a cruiser was hastily despatched from the Cape station to take over the whole of the territory on behalf of this country. On its way—so the story goes—this ship was met by a German gunboat, which announced to it the formal annexation of the country by Germany, and the British boat had therefore no option but to return to Cape Town and report its failure.

Rhodes now braced himself up for one supreme effort to keep in British hands the road to the hinterland. Knowing, as he did by this time, that President Kruger was behind these pseudo-republics that were springing up mushroom-like all over Bechuanaland, he was not long in perceiving that the next move of the wily old Dopper President would be to proclaim the extension of the Transvaal boundary westward to the limits of the German territory. As it was obvious that the Transvaal Government was actively intriguing at this time for the possession of Delagoa Bay, by this policy Cape Colony was in danger of being effectively shut in and prevented from any future expansion, while the whole of the trade of the interior would of necessity be diverted into Transvaal territory.

Fortunately, Rhodes found a willing listener to his views and fears in Sir Hercules Robinson, who was at this time the High Commissioner at the Cape. Sir Hercules had long had a suspicion in his mind that Kruger and the Transvaal Government generally

were behind the Boer adventurers in Griqualand and Bechuanaland; and this Rhodes was able to confirm. The High Commissioner had no hesitation, therefore, in writing immediately to the Imperial Government, and recommending that a protectorate over the southern portion of Bechuanaland should be forthwith proclaimed. This letter found Lord Derby in a more pliable mood than usual: the sudden move on the part of Germany had aroused some severe strictures on the home authorities, and there was much anxiety to know what the policy of the Government would be in reply to this annexation. With the thought of a general election before him, Lord Derby recommended the Government to agree to this protectorate being established.

Had it not been for the party system which prevails in England, and the fear of the electors being unfavourably impressed by the actions of the Government, the British Empire would never have been what it is to-day. It is rather humiliating to have to say it, but the fact remains, that nearly every important step which has ever been taken with regard to the Colonies has been taken more with a view to gaining a party triumph at the polls than with any idea of benefiting the Empire.

On the very day that the since famous London Convention was signed by the representatives of Great Britain and the Transvaal, February 27, 1884, Lord Derby telegraphed to Sir Hercules Robinson authorising him to proclaim a protectorate in Bechuanaland within the limits that had been fixed by the Colonial Secretary after a conference with the Transvaal delegates. At last Mr Rhodes had gained what he had battled for so long. The trade-route from

Cape Colony to Zambesia (as the country to the north of Bechuanaland and the Transvaal was then called) was secured to the British.

Mr John Mackenzie, a missionary of considerable experience in this part of Africa, but an Imperialist of somewhat narrow views, was appointed Deputy-Commissioner of the newly established protectorate, and forthwith took up his residence in the country. His most difficult task was to make the Boer settlers in the country, who had established the republics of Stellaland and Rooi-Grond, recognise the new order of things and accept British control. As events proved, Mr Mackenzie, though in many ways an able and talented man, was unfitted for this delicate mission. He immediately visited the two republics, and was fairly well received by the Boers in Stellaland under Commandant Van Niekerk, who had been elected president of that republic, for they bore pleasant memories of the manner in which Mr Rhodes had treated them on the occasion of his former visit. At Rooi-Grond, on the other hand, Mr Mackenzie was received with open defiance by the Boers, who persisted in attacking Montsoia, as previously mentioned, and in raiding his cattle, despite the proclamations and threats which Mr Mackenzie launched at their heads. They knew that they had the support of President Kruger and the Transvaal Government in what they did, and their recent experiences seemed to show them that they had only to persist in their rebellious attitude long enough to cause the British Government to beat a hasty and undignified retreat. Instead of proving by his firmness that the British control of the country would be upheld at all costs, and relying upon the moral support of the Stellaland

landers in his conflict with the Boers of Rooi-Grond, Mr Mackenzie very unwisely issued a proclamation declaring the whole of the land in both Rooi-Grond and Stellaland to be the property of the British Government, who would exercise the right to dispose of it in any way which seemed best to them.

This only served to add fuel to the fire of Boer opposition. It demolished at once the good feeling of the Stellaland Boers towards the British Government which Mr Rhodes had been at such pains to bring about. Rhodes had said to these Stellalanders in effect : "Keep your land titles by all means, but consent to write them in English instead of Dutch. Permit the Cape Colony to administer the country, and I will promise that you shall not be disturbed on your farms." The farmers had trusted Rhodes in this, for they could see that he was quite honest in what he said ; but now Mr Mackenzie by his action had raised a feeling of distrust in their minds which undid all that Rhodes had done.

Sir Hercules Robinson realised the gravity of the situation in Bechuanaland, and in a conversation with Rhodes on the subject said, "I am afraid Bechuanaland is gone ; these freebooters will take the country, and of course Kruger is behind it all." Rhodes agreed as to the gloomy outlook, but was not disposed to accept the view that things had gone too far for redemption, and that the route to the north was to be relinquished just as it seemed to be within his grasp. At any rate, he was determined to make one last effort before he consented to Bechuanaland passing under the control of the Transvaal, and with that end in view he sought the permission of the High Commissioner to go up to the country and see what

he could do to remedy Mr Mackenzie's mistakes. Sir Hercules agreed to his going up to Bechuanaland if he so desired, but was careful to point out that he could give him no force to back up his contentions. "Oh, that will be all right," responded Rhodes with his customary cheery optimism. "Give me permission to do as I think best, and I shall get through all right." "Yes," replied the High Commissioner, "you can have that permission; but if you get into a mess, I cannot back you up." "That is good enough for me," was Rhodes' answer, and he at once made preparations for his journey. Mr Mackenzie was recalled to Cape Town, and his authority as Deputy-Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate was transferred to Rhodes.

When Rhodes arrived in Stellaland he found Van Niekerk stationed on the banks of the Hartz river, and—more ominous still—the President of the Stellaland Republic was supported by a large commando from the Transvaal. Kruger seemed at last to be about to reveal his hand. To add to the difficulties of the situation, the Boers of Rooi-Grond were pursuing their policy of attacking the chief Montsoia and ravaging his country, displaying the while a fine contempt for the British protectorate. Altogether there was, in Mr Rhodes' words, "a pretty kettle of fish." He did not falter, however. He made at once for Van Niekerk's camp. His assurance and contempt for danger in putting himself unarmed and alone at the mercy of the Stellalanders rather took the Boers aback, while the free and easy manner in which he mingled with them, as though totally unconscious of their threatening attitude, completely nonplussed them.

Rhodes' meeting with Delarey, the most prominent man among the Boers of Stellaland after Van Niekerk, was typical of his whole conduct at this time, and is worth recounting. Seeing that Delarey possessed a considerable amount of control and influence over the Boers, Rhodes determined to conciliate him if it was humanly possible to do so—though it was obvious that Delarey was at the head of the party who urged war rather than submit to the control of Great Britain. Bent on prosecuting his scheme of conciliation without loss of time, Rhodes strolled over to Delarey's tent one morning and quietly invited himself to breakfast. With that hospitality which is one of the pleasantest features of the Boer character, the unexpected visitor was made welcome and a meal hastily got ready. While this was being done, Delarey turned to Rhodes with a grim look, and said abruptly, "Blood must flow!" If this ogre-like remark startled Rhodes at all, he was careful not to show it. "Well," he retorted coolly, "give me my breakfast, and we will talk about blood afterwards."

Even the most truculent mortal would be unable to make much headway against such total unconcern as Rhodes displayed, and in the end Delarey was won over to Rhodes' way of thinking. In describing in after-days the course which events took with Delarey, Rhodes said: "I stayed with Delarey a week; I became godfather to his grandchild, and in the end we made a settlement. Those who were serving under Van Niekerk and Delarey got their farms, and I secured the government of the country for her Majesty, which I believe was the right policy, and so both sides were satisfied."

The Boers of Rooi-Grond were more difficult to handle, and it seemed as though nothing would serve here but the arbitrament of the sword. General Piet Joubert, the Boer commandant-general, came up into the country, ostensibly to aid Rhodes in bringing about a settlement, but in reality to urge the Boers to persevere in their defiant attitude. In vain Rhodes parleyed with them, and alternately coaxed and threatened them. It was all to no purpose. In Rhodes' presence they again assailed Montsoia and his men, and though Rhodes urged Joubert to speak to the Boers, over whom he had great authority, the Boer commandant-general declined to interfere, and Rhodes seemed to be finally baffled.

He was not inclined, however, to give up his task. He clung with great obstinacy to the belief that even at the eleventh hour he would be able to bring about a peaceful settlement. But President Kruger administered the deathblow to these hopes by audaciously issuing a proclamation adding Bechuanaland to the Transvaal! This was done in spite of the fact that by the London Convention the Transvaal was not to extend its boundaries in any direction without the prior knowledge and consent of the British Government; and of course it completely ignored the fact that a British protectorate had been established over the country.

Such conduct was too flagrant to be allowed to pass unnoticed. The Imperial Government decided to send up a military force to uphold the supremacy of Great Britain in this region. Sir Charles Warren was selected to command this expedition, which was about 4000 strong, and was composed of a joint-force of regular troops and Colonial levies. President

Kruger now realised that he had gone a little too far, and that the time was not ripe for him to endeavour once more to oppose the military forces of Great Britain; and he urged a peaceable settlement with all the means at his command. In this he was well seconded by the Bond members of the Cape Parliament, who could see nothing very wrong in the attitude of the Transvaal President; and in the end it was arranged that Kruger should meet Sir Charles Warren and Mr Rhodes for a conference somewhere along the frontier.

The place finally selected for this meeting was the village of Fourteen Streams, in the district of Barkly West. This was at the beginning of 1885. Accompanying President Kruger was a young Hollander named Leyds, then comparatively unknown, though he has since become notorious; and this conference is further remarkable for the fact that at it for the first time were brought face to face Kruger and Rhodes, who may fittingly be taken to represent the two great influences that have been the cause of so much strife and dispute in South Africa.

So soon as the conference opened, Kruger adopted a very humble and suppliant tone, and endeavoured to prevent Warren's troops being moved up into the disturbed country. Rhodes put the situation before the Transvaal President in incisive terms, and emphasised the fact that Joubert could easily have put an end to the whole difficulty had he been disposed to do so. "Why," asked Rhodes very pertinently—"why is not Joubert here to explain his actions and to answer for himself?" The only answer which Kruger could make was that "what was done was done and could not be helped." As for Joubert not

using his influence to recall the Boers from raiding British territory, all Kruger had to say was: "I did not see my way to send armed men to oppose them; I thought it better and simpler to take over the land by proclamation." Such naïveté of reasoning appealed to Rhodes' sense of humour; but with relentless severity he pressed his point, until in the end Kruger was obliged to give in, and to promise to recall his proclamation, and to relinquish all further claims to the possession of Bechuanaland either by himself or his Burghers.

Thus the trade route from Cape Colony to the north was finally secured to this country by the dogged pertinacity of Mr Rhodes. Sir Charles Warren has very often been eulogised for bringing about a bloodless settlement of the Bechuanaland question, at a time when it seemed certain that another war between the Boers and the British was about to break out; but the great share which Mr Rhodes had in bringing about the settlement is apt to be overlooked. Had Sir Charles Warren been left to his own resources in the matter, it is more than probable that either he would have been overreached by Kruger and Leyds or that war would have broken out.

CHAPTER VI.

RHODES, THE MAN.

It is a difficult task to separate Cecil Rhodes the man from Cecil Rhodes the politician and empire-builder. Since his first entry into political life his whole existence has been devoted to the accomplishment of his vast projects; everything else has been made subservient to this. It is not too much to say that an account of the purely private life of Mr Rhodes, as distinct from his public career, would be less attractive and more uninteresting than that of any fox-hunting country squire who ever vegetated in the heart of rural England. It is only when Rhodes is considered in the light of a pioneer of Empire, and, in a lesser degree, as a financier of considerable genius, that he offers any points of interest for his biographer to lay hold of.

Coupled with the uneventfulness and placid monotony of his private life is Rhodes' great and almost insurmountable aversion to talking about himself. It is possible for one to spend days, and even weeks, in his company without hearing him speak of his own affairs or of the events of his past life; though in the same space of time an intelligent listener would gain a great insight into his plans and ambitions for



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the future. As one of his friends once remarked about him, "Rhodes is always planning to himself the things he must do the year after next."

As has previously been mentioned in these pages, for many years he shared a small bachelor establishment at Kimberley with his *fidus Achates*, Dr Jameson. When his political duties compelled him to be in Cape Town he dwelt entirely at his club. About the time of the Bechuanaland difficulty, however, he grew tired of club life, and yearned for a mode of living which would afford him more room to turn round in, as it were; so he set about seeking for a suitable house on the outskirts of Cape Town which he could convert into his home. At length he pitched upon an old rambling house in that heavy Dutch style of architecture which is so common at the Cape. The place was called Groot Schuur, and it was here that Rhodes decided to pitch his tent. The position of this house is one of the most charming that it is possible to find anywhere in the neighbourhood of Cape Town. It stands on the main road from Cape Town to the little suburb of Rondesbosch, in the heart of a most beautiful country. At the time that Rhodes bought it the house was in rather a dilapidated condition, but he soon had it restored and put to rights. It stands some distance from the roadway, and is approached by a fine avenue of lofty pines and oaks.

With the object of gaining as much seclusion as possible, Rhodes purchased several of the adjoining farms, and his estate now stretches for some distance up the lower slopes of Table Mountain, which frowns in the rear of Groot Schuur. The house, as already mentioned, is of a rather curious type of architecture,

and a prominent feature is the deep *stoep*, or verandah, which runs the entire length of the house and has its roof supported by massive stucco pillars. Its quaintly twisted chimneys, too, and its many gables, tend to give it an air of great antiquity. The house which stands at present on the site is the second that has existed there since Mr Rhodes bought the place, the original Groot Schuur being almost totally destroyed by fire in 1896. The present building, however, is an exact replica of the old one.

The interior of the house is typical of its owner. Everything is massive and of heavy construction, yet an air of simplicity pervades the whole. The walls are lined with teak, and this, coupled with the fact that almost all the furniture and hangings are rather dark in colour, tends to make the house seem more sombre and gloomy than would otherwise be the case. Groot Schuur, however, is far from being dull. Its air of homeliness appeals to the stranger so soon as he enters.

The two entrance-halls have their dark walls literally covered with trophies of the chase, some very beautiful heads of the South African fauna being among them, together with native spears, shields, guns, and other implements of warfare, most of them relics of the Matabele wars.

In many respects the spacious library is the most attractive room in the house. Here Mr Rhodes does most of his work ; it is in this room that the details of many of his big schemes have been thought out and decided upon. The old-fashioned Dutch style of furnishing which prevails throughout the house is adhered to here. The most striking thing in the room, taking the owner's life and disposition into account, is a

tattered old union-jack, a memento of some hard-fought field or another, which hangs on the wall of the apartment facing the chair in which Rhodes usually sits. Facing this flag on the opposite wall is a Portuguese standard which the Rhodesian Pioneers under Major Forbes captured in Manicaland during the friction between the two countries in 1891. A feature of the well-filled book-shelves with which the library is lined is a series of handsomely bound, type-written translations of classical literature which were executed specially for Mr Rhodes. Ever since his schoolboy days Rhodes has had an intense love for the literature of Greece and Rome, and in his spare moments he is very fond of dipping into one of these translations.

The grounds of Groot Schuur are even more interesting than the house. In one portion is the famous private menagerie which Mr Rhodes has established, containing specimens of all the rarer South African animals, with few exceptions. The smaller animals, such as antelopes, are not confined in cages, but are permitted to range in freedom over a considerable tract of land carefully fenced in. It was from this menagerie, by the way, that the lion cub which Rhodes sent to Kruger was taken. It will be remembered that the Transvaal President returned this gift of Rhodes' with some show of indignation.

The flowers in the gardens are one of the special sights of Groot Schuur. Contrary to the English fashion, they are not grouped together in trim beds and carefully contrasted one kind with another, but are permitted to grow in semi-wildness in huge masses. The principal flowers thus flourishing are multicoloured *lunias* or Ceylon lilies, bougainvilleas, and fuchsias.

Running round one end of the house are the rose-gardens, which in the flowering-season form a veritable feast for the gods. Here the same wild profusion prevails as in other parts of the ground: the masses of blooms of every colour and variety are positively bewildering to the eye. The heavy scent of the flowers and the pellucid clearness of the air together tend to make the rose-gardens at Groot Schuur seem a perfect paradise to many of those who are privileged to enter them. It may be mentioned that the grounds of Groot Schuur are thrown open to the inhabitants of Cape Town every Sunday—a concession that is much appreciated.

Mr Rhodes' second sister, Miss Edith Rhodes, has for many years past performed the part of hostess at Groot Schuur, and among the visitors at the house she is every whit as popular as her brother. As most people are aware, Mr Rhodes has never married. Popular rumour has credited him with being “a woman-hater,” which, however, is rather wide of the mark, as the following anecdote will show. Rhodes was once staying at a country-house in England when a lady of the party made it in her way to question him on his reputed dislike for the opposite sex. “Will you tell me why you dislike women, Mr Rhodes?” she asked. “Has any member of the sex ever played you a nasty trick?” “Indeed no,” was Rhodes’ smiling reply. “It is all a mistake, I assure you. I cannot think where the idea came from that I dislike women. On the contrary, I like and admire them very much, and I assure you that I realise the value of their help.” Despite this denial, however, there is no doubt that Mr Rhodes fights very shy of the fair sex, and this, perhaps, is not to be lamented, for



VALLEY MOUNTAINS FROM THE GROUNDS OF GROOT SCHUR.

domestic ties would greatly hamper him in his work. Probably there is some reason for Mr Rhodes remaining single through life ; but if there is, he has kept it studiously to himself.

Mr Rhodes' principal, and indeed almost his only, form of outdoor recreation at the present day is riding. From his youth he has been accustomed to rise early in the morning and set off for a long ride before the sun has had time to take the edge off the keen air. Nearly every morning about six o'clock, when he is residing at Groot Schuur, he goes for a gallop over the slopes of the Mountain. These rides are usually taken alone. Sometimes an intimate friend may be invited to join him, but this is of rare occurrence. Riding by himself over the deserted slopes of Table Mountain, and with that stupendous work of nature frowning down upon him, Rhodes is able to commune with himself in peace, and many projects have been worked out and solutions found for many difficulties during these morning rides, from which he returns refreshed alike in mind and body. When Rhodes is in London, he is to be seen early every morning cantering along the Row, with only the few grooms exercising sheeted horse to bear him company.

With regard to his indoor recreations, his great hobby is reading, in which his taste is very catholic. His favourite subject is history, especially the history of his own country. He is a great admirer of Froude and Carlyle, and is credited with knowing Gibbon almost by heart. Biography is another favourite subject, and reference has been made already to his delight in classical story. In fiction his favourite book is 'Vanity Fair,' which he enjoys more than any other book he has ever read. With regard to

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his fondness for reading, he has often lamented that the vast amount of work he has to get through daily prevents him from devoting more time to his books.

Apropos of this there is a story related of him to the effect that, just after the trial at the bar of Dr Jameson and his companions, and when Rhodes was being attacked on all sides both in South Africa and in London, a friend said to him, more in joke than in earnest, "Suppose the Imperial Government decides to send you to prison along with Jameson, Rhodes, how will you like that?" Rhodes turned the matter over in his mind for a moment in that curiously grave manner with which he approaches even the most trivial subjects, and then said: "Well, I suppose I should get along all right. There are a lot of books I have been wanting to read for many years now, without having an opportunity of doing so. I should go in for a course of reading. I suppose," he went on meditatively, "they would allow me to have books in prison." This story incidentally illustrates the philosophical temperament which Rhodes brings to bear upon the events of his life, and his steadfast determination to look ever on the bright side of things. As a noted figure in London Society once remarked, "Cecil Rhodes is the high-priest of optimism."

One of Rhodes' hobbies is the collection of antique furniture, china, paintings, &c. Anything Dutch or Flemish he has an intense admiration for, and Groot Schuur is literally crammed with curios of this nature. He has an especial *penchant* for old carved oaken chests, of which he possesses a large number of beautiful workmanship. His gardens absorb a good deal of his attention, and he is very fond of the cultivation

of roses. As has been seen, he has rather unconventional ideas as to what a garden should be like, and evinces a strong preference for nature's plan of horticulture over that of the landscape-gardener. Rhodes is a fair billiard-player, is fond of pyramids, and is a decent though not a very keen shot. Music is another of his recreations, and though by no means a brilliant performer himself, he is a very good judge of other people's capabilities in the art.

The character of Mr Rhodes has proved an enigma to every one who has come in contact with him. Many men of note have put their impressions of Cecil Rhodes upon paper, but scarce two of them can be found to agree in their estimate. Mr Rudyard Kipling, as might be expected, is an enthusiastic devotee. Interviewed on his idea of Rhodes in 1898, Mr Kipling said that he was "the greatest of living men," an opinion which, though exaggerated, is in some measure correct. Certainly Rhodes is one of the most interesting personages at present before the public notice. Another gifted writer, Mr Justin McCarthy, in his 'History of Our Own Times,' says of Mr Rhodes that "he was above all things an adventurer by temperament and by career. He was an adventurer as some of Walter Raleigh's colleagues and compatriots were adventurers, . . . who, eager as they were to extend the Empire, were not unwilling at the same time to make money out of the enterprise." This must mean, if it means anything, that Mr McCarthy believes that Mr Rhodes' chief object has been to make money: if in the doing of it he has incidentally benefited the Empire, well and good, but that has not been his primary object. This view cannot be accepted for a moment. A man who

only spends £600 a-year on himself—and that has been Mr Rhodes' limit for purely personal expenses for many years past—cannot be accused of an overweening desire to make money. Rhodes' aim all through life has been to extend the British Empire, and to do this he has been compelled to accumulate a large capital. But for money itself Rhodes has a contempt which at times he carries a little too far.

In the sense of being a pioneer of civilisation Rhodes is undoubtedly an adventurer, using that word in its best and truest sense; but to compare him to Raleigh's colleagues and compatriots is surely to overshoot the mark, and seems to point to the fact that Mr M'Carthy has never devoted any very close attention to Mr Rhodes and his character. The truth is that Rhodes is a bundle of inconsistencies, and that we no sooner feel that at length we have estimated his character correctly, and fathomed all its depths, than he does or says something which upsets the whole of our calculations, and it is necessary to begin all over again. He is undoubtedly an opportunist: there are few great men who are not. He has been headstrong at times—very notably immediately after the unfortunate raid, when he flatly refused to make any effort to recall Jameson from the Transvaal, in spite of the entreaties and demands of the High Commissioner and the Cape Government. On the other hand, he can be extremely politic and diplomatic on occasions. In conversation he can be smooth and gentle, as, again, he can be abrupt and curt almost to the point of brutality. By nature kindly and easeful, once he is offended or thwarted in his desires he is obstinate and implacable. Slow to anger, he is slower still to forgive.

There is a certain cynicism in his nature which displays itself rather prominently at times, but this quality has been much overrated by many writers. The oft-quoted phrase, to the effect that "he never met a man whom he could not buy," was, it may be authoritatively stated, never used by him. The germ of this fiction is to be found in the fact that one day, many years ago, when discussing his proposed telegraph-wire from one end of Africa to the other, somebody asked him how he proposed to carry it across the Soudan, which was then under the domination of the Khalifa. "Oh, leave it to me," Rhodes answered. "I never met the man yet that I could not come to an agreement with, and I shall be able to fix things up with the Khalifa right enough when the time comes." This is the true version of a story that in its distorted form has been so widely circulated.

The keynote of Rhodes' whole life is unconventionality, and unconventionality, it must be confessed, he carries at times to extreme limits. In illustration of his original methods of conducting business, it may be mentioned that a great part of his work is transacted in all sorts of out-of-the-way places. He has been seen standing in the streets of Kimberley tranquilly writing cheques with as much disregard for his surroundings as though he were in the privaey of his own office.

His brusque habit of saying exactly what he thinks in the most pointed language has had varying effects on the different public men with whom he has come in contact. It has already been seen how General Gordon received these opinions. During his visit to England in 1890 or 1891, Rhodes met Mr Gladstone, and the two conversed for some time together. It

was then that Rhodes gave the great statesman his views on the Home Rule Bill. Mr Gladstone expressed some surprise that Rhodes (as he thought) should have changed his views with regard to the Irish question since the days when he sent his much-talked-about cheque of £10,000 to Mr Parnell. Rhodes denied having altered his opinions in the slightest, but said bluntly that he regarded Mr Gladstone's bill with abhorrence because it rendered the separation of Ireland from England inevitable. As is well known, it was Mr Gladstone's firm belief that his bill would tend rather to strengthen the bonds between the two countries than to weaken them, and he inquired how Mr Rhodes justified his belief. "Because," answered Rhodes, "by that bill you would have made Ireland a taxed republic!" "A taxed republic!" repeated Mr Gladstone, in evident surprise; "how do you mean?" "Yes," continued Rhodes, "a taxed republic: taxed to the tune of four millions a-year, without a single vote in the distribution and control of that colossal tribute."

Lord Salisbury does not appear to have come into very close contact with Mr Rhodes in any but a strictly official way. He showed the effect which Rhodes' personality had made upon him, however, by stating on one occasion in the House of Lords, with a plaintive motion of his hands, that "Mr Cecil Rhodes was a gentleman with a considerable force of character." Another prominent politician, Sir William Harcourt, once said, regarding Mr Rhodes' well-known views on preferential tariffs between England and her colonies, and the necessity for compelling the African natives to work: "Reasonable man, Mr Rhodes! He is so easily satisfied! All he asks us

to do is to give up free trade and to restore slavery!" There is, of course, exaggeration here; but it may be pardoned for the sake of the joke.

In his dress and person Mr Rhodes is simple to a fault: outward show is nothing at all to him. This is well illustrated by his visit to the Cannon Street Hotel in London, in May 1898, to address the shareholders of the British South Africa Company on the result of his negotiations with the British Government and the German Emperor concerning the construction of the Cape to Cairo railway and the trans-continental telegraph-wire. The courtyard of the hotel was filled with an interested crowd, waiting to see Rhodes arrive. Many carriages drawn by high-stepping horses rolled in, and as each of these drew up at the entrance of the hotel the spectators pressed eagerly forward to see if Rhodes was the occupant; but on each occasion they were disappointed. At length, when the crowd was growing almost tired of waiting, a ramshackle old "four-wheeler," pulled by a horse that was, like its driver, obviously "in the sere and yellow leaf," entered the courtyard and made its way to the door of the hotel almost without notice. Before those on the watch could realise what was going forward, Rhodes and one of his private secretaries quickly alighted, and entered the hotel almost unnoticed. The crowd had never supposed that a millionaire would ride about London in a broken-down "growler."

Rhodes' clothes, too, are always designed more with an eye for comfort than with any idea of being fashionable or "smart," and those who know him best admit that he looks more like himself in his rough-and-ready jacket suit of blue serge, to which he is so devoted, than in anything else that he dons. When he was

the Prime Minister of Cape Colony he had the reputation of wearing the shabbiest hat in the House of Assembly. A lady who had long admired Rhodes, but had never previously seen him in the flesh, once plaintively remarked when he rose to make a speech in London, "*That* Cecil Rhodes! Why, my gardener dresses better than he does! I am disappointed." This is, of course, a very wrong stand-point to take—to judge the man by his outward appearance—but very few will deny that it is an essentially feminine one.

Rhodes takes a delight in shocking the sticklers for etiquette and conventionality. There is a story, well known in Cape Town, but new, it is believed, in this country, of Rhodes opening an extension of the Cape Town suburban railway. This line runs to various little villages along the coast, and the spot at which the ceremony was to be performed was one of those delightful little bays so plentiful round about Cape Town. The day was of the most sultry description. Rhodes was at the time Premier of Cape Colony, and many notable personages were invited to be present on the occasion. A luncheon was first held in the village, at which Rhodes was present, and then a move was made in the direction of the shore, near to which the railway station was situated. Everything was in readiness for the opening ceremony, when suddenly it was noticed that the central figure, Rhodes, was missing. There was some little consternation at this, and messengers were sent in all directions to find him. Presently the Prime Minister was espied calmly enjoying a bathe in the blue waters, totally oblivious of the fact that he was keeping every one waiting, and that he was rapidly becoming the cynosure of all eyes. At length

the situation seemed to dawn upon him, and hastily getting into his clothes, with the sea-water dripping from his hair, he declared the line open for traffic, maintaining the while a perfectly serious and composed face. The story as given above was related by one who claimed to witness the whole affair ; and those who know Mr Rhodes' love of unconventionality will not find much difficulty in accepting it as correct.

In addition to his home at Groot Schuur, Mr Rhodes also possesses a very extensive farm in Rhodesia, near the edge of the Matoppo Hills, to the south-east of Bulawayo. This farm is called Saurdale, and lies in the midst of some striking scenery. Here Mr Rhodes has erected a huge dam for the purpose of collecting water for the irrigation of the surrounding country, thereby rendering it better fitted for agricultural purposes than it has previously been. Saurdale is used by Mr Rhodes as a retreat during such times as he desires to leave his work behind him for a spell. In Cape Town or in London he finds so much work waiting for him that he has but little time for rest or recreation, so that as soon as he finds that he imperatively needs a rest, off he goes to his farm with one or two of his inner circle of friends, and there, according to popular rumour, at any rate, throws off the cares which usually beset him, and for a brief space enjoys a life unencumbered by pressing thoughts of politics or finance.

Before this rather rambling estimate of Rhodes the man is brought to a close, mention should be made of his generosity and accessibility. When he is at Groot Schuur he is to be seen by all who have business with him. He gives all a patient hearing. His poorer neighbours know that in Mr Rhodes they always find

one who is willing to help them either with his purse or with his advice. He devotes considerable sums annually to charity, though in discriminating fashion. Any one thinking to impose upon Rhodes with a concocted story of hardship or privation would speedily find himself undeceived.

Rhodes' treatment of the natives will be dealt with more fully farther on ; but it may be said here that the "boys" employed at Groot Schuur positively worship him. When the *baas* appears within their sight he is greeted by a row of grinning brown faces which speak more eloquently than words of the kindness which his native servants experience at his hands.

Since the death of Lobengula Mr Rhodes has maintained and educated out of his own pocket two young sons of the Matabele king, sending them to a first-class college in Cape Town and having them over to spend their vacations with him at Groot Schuur.

Among his immediate neighbours Rhodes is, apart from politics, highly popular, and many and varied are the stories that one hears to his credit round about Rondesbosch and Groot Schuur.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AMALGAMATION OF THE DIAMOND MINES.

In bringing about the withdrawal of the Transvaal claims to Bechuanaland, and the submission of the inhabitants of the pseudo-republics of Goshen, Stellaland, and Rood-Grond to British rule, Mr Rhodes and Sir Charles Warren had worked amicably together. So soon, however, as the question of the settlement and future administration of the Protectorate came under notice, and details of government had to be arranged, the two were found to be at cross-purposes. Sir Charles Warren was above all things a soldier, and one, moreover, who was deeply imbued with admiration for that iron discipline and absolute control of subordinates which attains its apotheosis in the German army. His aim apparently was to govern the Bechuanaland Protectorate with a stern hand, and to prove to the Boer population of that region, by continuous show of firmness, necessary or unnecessary, that England's control was to be something more than merely nominal.

Throughout the whole of the negotiations Rhodes had been careful to distinguish between the Boers of Stellaland, who had shown themselves open to reason and agreed to accept the British protectorate

without demur, and the Burghers of Rooi-Grond, who had defied the power of Great Britain, and had treated the proclamations of the Commissioner with contempt. In pursuance of this policy, he had pledged his word that the Stellalanders should continue in undisturbed possession of their farms. He agreed also that, for the time being at any rate, the government of Stellaland should be left in the hands of Van Niekerk and the Boers, of course under the final direction and control of the High Commissioner. In this policy Mr Rhodes had the full approval of both the High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, and the Colonial Secretary, Lord Derby.

Sir Charles Warren had in the first instance acquiesced in Rhodes' settlement, and had telegraphed from Cape Town to Van Niekerk stating that he was prepared to adhere to the terms arranged between him and Mr Rhodes. In spite of this, no sooner was he on the spot than he suddenly veered round and repudiated Rhodes' settlement almost in its entirety, declining to be bound by it in any way. This seeming double-dealing not unnaturally incensed the Boers of Stellaland, and rendered them suspicious and distrustful of the British Special Commissioner.

As soon as the change in Sir Charles Warren's attitude became known at the Cape, Rhodes set off for Bechuanaland to confer with the Special Commissioner and urge him to reconsider his position and to respect the pledges which, with the sanction, be it remembered, of both the Cape Government and the Colonial Office, Rhodes had given. Warren took this visit of Rhodes very badly; indeed he went so far as to threaten to resign his post as Special Commissioner if some change were not at once made in

Rhodes' status—for the latter was still the Deputy-Commissioner of Bechuanaland. In order to prevent a rupture, which he perceived would seriously endanger the good government of Bechuanaland, Rhodes at once offered to act in direct subordination to Warren instead of to the High Commissioner, with the stipulation that the promises which he had made to the people of Stellaland should be respected.

The differences between Warren and Rhodes were thus patched up; but it was obvious that two men of such diametrically opposite views could not work in harmony for long. On February 14, 1884, a conference was held between the Special Commissioner and the Burghers of Stellaland at Vryburg, and at this Mr Rhodes was present. The chief point of this conference was that Sir Charles Warren announced his intention of observing an entirely new boundary-line on the south of Stellaland, in place of the one which had been previously recognised. The effect was to place several of the farms which Mr Rhodes had included in his agreement outside the limits of the republic, and therefore beyond the terms of the settlement which Rhodes had come to with the people of Stellaland. Rhodes, needless to say, dissented from this arbitrary proceeding, and perhaps he expressed his opinion more bluntly than was advisable under the circumstances. At the request of Sir Charles Warren he placed his objections to the latter's speech to the Boer settlers on paper. In answer to this Mr Rhodes received a letter from Sir Charles, the tone of which compelled him to resign his position, and to bring the matter under the notice of the High Commissioner.

In his letter to Sir Hercules Robinson resigning his

deputy-commissionership, Mr Rhodes said, regarding the letter he had received from Sir Charles Warren which led to his taking that step: "Whatever may have been my differences with the Special Commissioner upon public grounds, I was at all times anxious to avoid even the appearance of a personal feud or misunderstanding; but I feel that I should be entirely wanting in self-respect if I did not bring specially to your Excellency's notice the terms of this communication, addressed to an officer who had been humbly but loyally endeavouring for several months past, without any of the ordinary inducements which such service offers, to promote such a settlement of difficult affairs as would tend to the maintenance of British interests and the settled peace of this portion of her Majesty's dominions."

"Under the circumstances which had arisen," the letter continued, "I felt that I could no longer retain my position with honour. Every promise which I had made to the Stellaland people as regards their form of government, their land grants, and their losses from cattle-thefts, had, although ratified by Sir Charles Warren, been repeatedly violated; whilst proceedings almost ludicrous in their illegality had been instituted against Mr Van Niekerk, who had been made use of by us for our own purposes almost up to the moment of his arrest. I accordingly hastened to Cape Town for the purpose of placing in your Excellency's hands, which I do now, the commission with which you did me the honour to intrust me."

It was not to be expected that this quarrel between Mr Rhodes and Sir Charles Warren would be allowed to pass without notice in the Cape House of Assembly.

By the attitude he had taken up, Rhodes had laid himself open to attack both from the extreme pro-British party and from the supporters of the Afrikander Bond. The British jingoes were incensed at what they considered Rhodes' weakness in dealing with the Boers of Stellaland, by conceding to them such a large proportion of their demands; while the leaders of the Bond, professing to regard the interior beyond the then existing limits of Cape Colony as the birthright of the Transvaal, held that a great wrong had been done to President Kruger and his Burghers by the proclamation of a British protectorate over Bechuanaland. Students of South African history must ever bear in mind that from the first day it was formed the Afrikander Bond has been consistently anti-British—an attitude which may have been more or less concealed on some occasions, but has never been relinquished.

Speaking on the Bechuanaland settlement about this time in the Cape Assembly, Rhodes riddled through and through the Afrikander argument that Bechuanaland belonged by right to the Transvaal. In a speech which displayed a considerable amount of statesmanlike foresight, he pointed out that, even if Great Britain had permitted the Transvaal to acquire Bechuanaland, that state would not have been allowed to remain long in undisputed possession of the land. Germany would, he was convinced, have forced some quarrel on the Transvaal, thereby bringing about a war that would in all probability have resulted in Germany annexing the Transvaal, and thus effectually shutting Cape Colony out from the interior. "What," asked Mr Rhodes, "was the bar to this being done, and what prevented Germany accomplishing her object

of the conquest of the Transvaal ? Bechuanaland. What was the use to Germany," he continued, " of a few sand-heaps at Angra Pequena and the arid deserts between Angra Pequena and the interior, with this English and Colonial bar between her and the Transvaal ? "

It does not seem to have occurred to any other man in the Cape Government at this time that the real aim of Germany was the conquest and subjection of the Transvaal ; yet there can be little doubt to-day that this was really what Bismarck was working for, and that it was only the timely establishment of a British protectorate over Bechuanaland which prevented this ambitious scheme being carried into effect.

The Bechuanaland settlement once disposed of, Rhodes relinquished for a time his prominent share in the government of Cape Colony. For one thing, there was little business of more than purely local interest to be transacted, and Rhodes has always disliked "the politics of the parish pump," preferring "to deal in millions and to think in empires." A second reason which led Rhodes temporarily to sink into comparative obscurity, so far as politics were concerned, was the pressing work waiting him at Kimberley in connection with the amalgamation of the diamond mines. In 1885 Rhodes left Cape Town for Kimberley, determined to put things into train for the bringing about of this object, and he threw himself into the affair with characteristic energy and impetuosity.

At this time the two principal mines being worked in Kimberley were the De Beers mine and the Kimberley mine. On each of these properties there were many separate and distinct companies and syndicates at work, while several more were scattered

around the neighbourhood exploiting less important mines. The chief figures in the group of companies working in the De Beers mine were Mr Rhodes and Mr Alfred Beit, while in the Kimberley mine two young Jews, B. I. Barnato and Woolf Joel, were rapidly acquiring a controlling influence. In fact, it may be said that these four men dominated the diamond-fields at this time. Rhodes and Beit were steadfastly following out their policy of buying up all the smaller companies interested in the De Beers mine, and incorporating their interests in the De Beers Mining Company. On the other hand, the Kimberley Central Mining Company, of which Barnato and Woolf Joel were the leading spirits, was pursuing exactly the same tactics with regard to the Kimberley mine. The two opposing groups were working towards the same end, and though they seemed to be running on parallel lines, in reality they were converging towards a junction in the future.

It was thought at first that when the policy of absorption was complete, and only the De Beers Company and the Kimberley Central Company were left, the two might, without any actual amalgamation, come to an agreement as to the regulation of the output and the price at which the diamonds were to be sold. Such was Barnato's belief at any rate. Rhodes, looking farther into the future, decided that sooner or later the two companies would have to coalesce and form one great monopoly, and this he was determined to bring about at the earliest possible moment, despite the strenuous opposition which he foresaw he would meet with from Barnato and his group.

Both Rhodes and Barnato had the same end in view —the control of the diamond output of South Africa;

but their motives were very different. Barnato was a financier pure and simple, with no thoughts beyond making good dividends for the shareholders in his companies ; and he saw that if the supply of diamonds could be regulated so as to keep a little in the wake of the demand, higher prices would be realised and increased profits made. With Rhodes the question was entirely on another footing. From his point of view the control of the diamond mines was only a means to an end : what he was working for was the formation of a gigantic monopoly with ample funds at its command, which he would be able to use for the purpose of developing his scheme of British expansion towards the Zambesi.

To obtain the means of coercing to some extent the Kimberley Central Company, Rhodes determined on buying up all the shares he could obtain in the only company working in the Kimberley mine, the French Diamond Mining Company, which the Barnato group had not been able to absorb. This company owned a very important section of the Kimberley mine, and though Barnato possessed a considerable proportion of the shares in this company, he had not the controlling interest necessary to bring about the amalgamation with his own company that he so greatly desired. The absorption of the French company, it will be understood, would have given the Kimberley Central Company the entire control of the Kimberley mine.

In order to combat Barnato's efforts to amalgamate with the French company, Rhodes about this time visited England for the purpose of raising sufficient capital to enable him to follow up the line of action he had mapped out for himself. In this he was very successful, obtaining the support of the historic Rothschild

firm among others. Returning to the diamond-fields with this strong backing, he at once set about buying up all the shares of the French company in the market.

At the end of a short time things had progressed so far that Rhodes, in his turn, was able to offer a scheme to the shareholders in the French company for amalgamation with the De Beers Company. But if Barnato's influence in the French company was not sufficiently powerful to enable him to carry his own scheme of amalgamation, he was at least in such a position as to be able to veto any rival scheme such as that brought forward by Rhodes. Things, therefore, were brought to an absolute deadlock, for neither side would budge an inch from the position it had taken up.

Open war was declared by the two great groups. The wily, keen-eyed Hebrew opposed himself to the impetuous and far-sighted Anglo-Saxon, and, as events proved, was out-matched and out-maneuvred all along the line. With ample capital at his command, Rhodes continued his policy of buying all the shares in the French company that he could lay his hands on. In retaliation, Barnato adopted the same tactics. It was a veritable battle of giants, and the whole history of finance can show nothing more interesting or more exciting than the long-drawn-out war which raged on the South African diamond-fields between Cecil Rhodes and “ Barney ” Barnato.

The methods adopted by these two geniuses of finance had the immediate effect of sending the shares of the French company bounding up in unprecedented fashion, and here it was that the weakness in Barnato's armour first became apparent. While every share which Rhodes bought was carefully locked up and retained, Barnato found that many individual share-

holders, who were in other respects strong supporters of his policy, were unable to resist the high prices which the shares were fetching ; so that in the end, to his deep disgust, he was forced into buying, at inflated prices, many shares which had already been in the hands of those who supported his scheme for amalgamation against that of De Beers. It was obvious that Barnato was labouring under a disadvantage which pointed to total defeat in the future.

As Rhodes had been the first to commence the duel, so was he the first to make overtures for peace. He saw that he held Barnato in the hollow of his hand, but he realised that it would be impossible for him, powerful as he was, to crush the Kimberley Central Company out of existence, and therefore he went to see Barnato to talk things over with him. In terse language he pointed out to his rival that the battle between them had chiefly benefited those traitors who, while vowing staunch allegiance to Barnato, were throwing their shares on to the market for purchase by Barnato or by Rhodes or by any one else who was prepared to give the highest price for them. Barnato admitted the truth of this, and bluntly demanded to know what Rhodes had to propose ; for, though cornered, Barnato was much too astute not to see that, however much his opponents might strive to gain the supremacy, his influence was still too great to prevent any one else gaining the day save at a prohibitive figure.

Rhodes offered to buy the whole of Barnato's holding in the French company at the current market value of the shares if he would consent to the amalgamation of that company with De Beers. Barnato declined point-blank. The very last thing

he desired was that the rival concern of De Beers should acquire any footing in the Kimberley mine.

Protracted negotiations followed, and in the end Rhodes agreed to a compromise by which the French company was to be amalgamated with the Kimberley Central Company, and Rhodes was to receive in return a large shareholding in the last-named corporation.

Thus the first part of the war between Rhodes and Barnato ended with honours fairly even. The more important stage of the fight was still to come. Rhodes had made up his mind that the Kimberley Central Company and De Beers ought to be welded together into one huge monopoly, and, though the Barnato group opposed this tooth and nail, he was determined to carry his scheme into effect. He employed the same tactics which had previously proved so successful, and set about increasing his holding in the Kimberley Central Company by buying up every share which came on the market. Barnato was perforce compelled to follow his example, and what had happened in the case of the French company's shares was now repeated with regard to the stock of the Kimberley Central Company.

Prices were greatly inflated, and the high value of the shares led to many people throwing their holdings into the market for the sake of the large profits to be realised. Barnato was steadily losing ground, and it seemed only a matter of time before he would be compelled to admit himself vanquished. At this point, however, a new factor entered into the situation which threatened danger to the Barnato group and to Rhodes and his friends alike. This

was the appearance on the scene of a foreign group of speculators controlling a large capital and headed by Mr J. X. Merriman, the well-known member of the Cape Assembly and a prominent leader of the Afrikander Bond. The aim of this clique was obviously anti-British, and menaced not only the diamond-fields but South Africa generally. Profiting by the feud between Rhodes and Barnato, these new-comers soon began to make their presence felt, and their influence was in the end checked by the only means possible—an alliance between the two previously contending forces.

A conference was called at which Rhodes and Mr Beit represented the De Beers Company, while Barnato and Woolf Joel appeared on behalf of the Kimberley Central Company. These four sat closeted together from the forenoon of one day until the early morning of the next, and several times it seemed as though the meeting would have to break up without any settlement having been arrived at. All were agreed upon the necessity for presenting a united front to the efforts of the foreign group; but the deadlock was provoked by Rhodes, who tenaciously clung to his condition that, in the event of the two great companies amalgamating, there was to be a clause in the trust-deed permitting him to employ the surplus funds of the monopoly to further his northern expansion schemes. Mr Beit heartily supported him, but the other two could not be brought to reconcile themselves to the proposal. With them it was a matter of business and of business only, and they could not see that a company, whose primary object was to work the diamond mines round Kimberley, should take part in, or assume any portion

of the risk of, building an empire in the interior of Africa.

Rhodes, however, held the trump-card, as the opposition perfectly well knew, and there was, moreover, a lingering fear in Barnato's mind that, if he refused to accept Rhodes' terms, the latter would straightway ally himself with the Merriman group, and so gravely menace the very existence of the Kimberley Central Company. This fear, by the way, was totally without reason, for it is unlikely in the extreme that Rhodes would under any circumstances have consented to work with a group whose objects were so avowedly anti-British. At last, at four o'clock in the morning, Barnato capitulated, and accepted Rhodes' terms, with the proviso that the amalgamated companies should be controlled by a small number of life governors, of which he was to be one, so as to place him in a position to oppose any scheme that he considered detrimental to the best interests of the shareholders in the consolidated company.

This great step gained, there were only matters of detail to settle, and the great diamond monopoly, for which the name of the "De Beers Consolidated Mines, Limited," was chosen, came into being, and the foreign speculators under Mr Merriman were routed and compelled to retire from the contest.

The formation of the consolidated company, however, was not allowed to take place without a struggle, for a small proportion of the shareholders in the Kimberley Central Company, instigated, as was currently believed, by Mr Merriman and his allies, declared that the directors of that company had no power to amalgamate with De Beers, and

carried the matter into the High Court at Cape Town. The affair turned upon the interpretation to be placed upon a clause in the articles of association of the Kimberley Central Company giving the directors power, upon receiving a vote representing three-fourths of the total shareholding in the company, to amalgamate at any time "with any similar company."

These malcontents argued that the De Beers Consolidated Company, by reason of the wide powers included in its trust-deed, was not a similar company within that section, and their view was upheld by the judge who heard the case. He pointed out that, as the De Beers Consolidated Company had the power to acquire lands in the interior, and generally to undertake the government and administration of any such regions, it could not be held that it was a similar company to the Kimberley Central, whose sole object was to work the diamond mines around the town from which it took its name.

The clever group of financiers who were at the head of the De Beers Consolidated Company were not, however, to be beaten in this fashion, and the Kimberley Central Company was immediately carried into voluntary liquidation, and the whole of its assets sold to the new company.

Thus a very important step in Rhodes' preparations for an empire to the north of the Limpopo was taken after many years of arduous labour and the overcoming of difficulties which might well have daunted any less courageous and persevering spirit than his own. Even Barnato, who had very few aims in life beyond the actual accumulation of wealth for himself and the shareholders who had intrusted their money to him, found himself compelled to take an interest

in the accomplishment of Rhodes' great schemes, and from the day that the De Beers Consolidated Company first came into existence down to the time he so unhappily perished by his own act, "Barney" Barnato was one of Rhodes' warmest admirers and staunchest supporters.

At the meeting already mentioned, which resulted in the amalgamation of the two companies, Barnato's remark after consenting to Rhodes' stipulations was—"Well, some of us have a fancy for one thing and some for another: you evidently have a fancy for building an empire in the north, and I suppose we must give you the means to do so."

Having gained the control of a capital sufficient to enable him to carry forward his schemes for expansion, Rhodes next turned his attention to the confederation of the South African states, which was the other great object of his life. With this end in view he set himself to conciliate the Boers of the Transvaal, whose racial hatred of the British was at this time very strong. He urged upon President Kruger with all the power at his command the advantages which would accrue through the establishment of a preferential tariff between the four leading states of the sub-continent, Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the South African Republic. In this idea is to be found the germ of the South African Customs Union which afterwards came into being. The Transvaal president, however, remained obstinate, and regarded all Rhodes' advances with that suspicion which has ever been so prominent in his character.

Another way in which Rhodes sought to bring about a closer union between the Transvaal and Cape Colony was by means of a railway from Cape Town to Pretoria,

which would have greatly aided the development of the resources of both states; but here again he met with only small success. The policy of the Transvaal at this time was, as indeed it has ever been, aggressively anti-British. With the memories of their triumphs in the late war still in their minds, the Burghers of the South African Republic felt a great contempt for the British colonists and their overtures. They looked upon themselves as a people much above the British in every respect, and regarded the efforts of the latter towards a closer union as a sign of something akin to despair, and the desire of a weak race for protection by a strong.

Rhodes' efforts, however, had one good effect. The unanswerable logic of his arguments, and his obviously sincere desire to work amicably with the Dutch population, caused the saner members of the Afrikander Bond to look more favourably upon him and his works than they had previously done. Rhodes at this period chose to appeal not so much to the Bond wirepullers as to the great body of the Dutch colonists direct. Accordingly he devoted some considerable attention to the complaints of the Dutch farmers in the midland districts of Cape Colony as to the difficulties and disadvantages under which they laboured, and by so doing he was able to bring about several much-needed reforms, which gained him the good-will of the dwellers in those districts, and immensely increased his popularity with the Dutch throughout the colony.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NORTHERN EXPANSION COMMENCED.

MR RHODES' policy of conciliating the Dutch-speaking population of Cape Colony was undoubtedly wise. Not only was the support of this section of the community imperatively necessary to him in his twin-schemes of expansion to the north and a federated South Africa under the flag of England, and extending from Cape Town to the Zambesi and beyond ; but if South Africa was to prosper and flourish as its supporters wished, it could only be by the two white races working hand in hand in common means towards a common end.

In this effort to cultivate the goodwill of the Dutch, and to gain their sympathies with his plans, Mr Rhodes was ultimately successful. The concessions he had been instrumental in obtaining for the Dutch farmers and wine-growers in the colony were much appreciated by those whom the concessions were chiefly intended to benefit. His action, too, on the question of the settlement of Bechuanaland reacted in Mr Rhodes' favour as soon as the first fierce heat of the controversy had subsided, and it was possible to see what his true attitude had been. The more intelligent portion of the Dutch inhabitants of Cape Colony

quickly realised that Mr Rhodes had held out against all the pressure that was brought against him for his ideal principle of equal rights for all settlers in Bechuanaland without reference to their race or creed.

This feeling of friendliness towards Mr Rhodes on the part of the Dutch portion of the population steadily grew as time went on, and not even the fulminations of the Bond leaders, who saw with feelings akin to dismay the rapid spread of Mr Rhodes' popularity, could prevent it.

Not long ago a London morning paper, whose views on African affairs are of the most extraordinary and contradictory description, gravely informed its readers that "Mr Rhodes is cordially hated by the Cape Dutch." This is, of course, absolutely incorrect. Mr Rhodes is not to-day, and never has been, hated by the Dutch of Cape Colony. Even after the Jameson Raid, when some soreness might reasonably have been expected, Mr Rhodes received the warmest welcome from every Dutch stronghold in Cape Colony that he visited. It is safe to declare that never at any time in his career has Mr Rhodes been hated by the great body of the Dutch population in Cape Colony, and those who assert the contrary do so either from ignorance or from spleen.

This goodwill of the Dutch towards Mr Rhodes did not, of course, come about all in a minute. It was the growth of years; but, as Mr Rhodes once said, when referring to his determination to carry through any scheme on which he had set his mind, "It took me fifteen years to get a mine, but I got it. Though my boat may be slow in the race, I know exactly what I am starting for." In this terse sentence will be found the secret of much of his success. In the first

place, he makes up his mind as to exactly what it is he wants; once he has done so, he suffers nothing to prevent him from carrying his point.

While quietly preparing for his move to the north, Mr Rhodes set on foot negotiations for a railway from Cape Town to Pretoria; but President Kruger was obdurate, and turned a deaf ear to all arguments in favour of such a scheme. It was about this time that Kruger and Rhodes, unconsciously perhaps, embarked upon that long duel which was to culminate, though not to end, in the wretched Jameson Raid. The wonderfully rich goldfields of the Witwatersrand had just been discovered, and the influx of miners into the Transvaal was unprecedented. It was plain that the Transvaal could no longer maintain its attitude of keeping aloof from the remainder of South Africa. President Kruger's dream of a pastoral republic, pursuing its own road unhampered with and disconnected from anything which went on outside its borders, was no longer possible. The sudden inrush of a large European population, which threatened to swamp the original Burgher population, shattered at a single blow this Boer ideal.

Kruger, however, was determined that if he could not actually prevent the gold mines being worked, as he would have wished to do, he would at any rate hamper them and repress their development as much as possible. The idea of railways running through his country was most distasteful to the president of the Transvaal, and for a long time he sternly set his face against their introduction; but in the end he relented so far as to consent to a line being constructed from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria. This concession rendered him, if anything, more determined than ever to resist

Mr Rhodes' scheme for a railway northwards from Cape Town through the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, and so on to the north. In 1887 a company was formed by an American, Colonel McMurdo, to build that portion of the Delagoa Bay-Pretoria line which ran through Portuguese territory.

The Government of the Orange Free State, on the other hand, was fairly favourable to Mr Rhodes' scheme for a railway through that country to the Transvaal. President Brand and his advisers were sufficiently far-sighted to see that, with the continued development of the Rand goldfield, the carrying trade to Johannesburg from the south would increase year by year, and they were not averse from receiving their share of this trade. Despite the intrigues of Kruger to get the Free State to oppose this railway scheme of Mr Rhodes, it was obvious to all that when the Cape Government, which supported Mr Rhodes in his plan for the northern extension of the railway, was in a position to go ahead with their project, the Free State would agree to the line passing through its territory.

While these negotiations with the Transvaal were in progress, Rhodes was, as has been said, preparing to take his first step towards the realisation of his northern expansion scheme. In 1885 the Imperial Government had extended the Bechuanaland Protectorate as far northwards as the twenty-second parallel of south latitude, so as to embrace Khama's country; and it was to the north of this that Mr Rhodes intended to commence his move towards the interior.

The vast country to the north of the Limpopo river was under the iron rule of Lobengula, the king of the powerful and warlike Matabele tribe. Mr Rhodes

was not alone in desiring the control of this rich country. In 1887 the Portuguese Government had published an official map showing the whole of Lobengula's dominions as Portuguese territory. This led to a protest by the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, and in the end the authorities at Lisbon withdrew their claims to the country west of the thirty-second degree of east longitude. At a later period a rectification of the Portuguese frontier took place with the assent of Great Britain.

It was the Transvaal, however, that led Mr Rhodes to move earlier than otherwise he would have done. The warlike nature of the powerful Matabele tribe had prevented President Kruger following out his custom of sending isolated parties of raiding Boers into country he coveted, there to form pseudo-republics that should, by a species of natural transition, in due course become incorporated with the Transvaal. Accordingly he was forced to adopt other tactics, which will be referred to more fully presently.

Matabeleland, with its attached province of Mashonaland, had always been marked down by the Boers of the Transvaal for addition to their country when occasion offered, and the authorities at Pretoria employed every means in their power to keep the British from gaining any foothold in the country to the north of the Limpopo. In pursuance of this policy General Joubert, the commandant-general of the forces of the South African Republic, so far back as 1882, wrote a letter to Lobengula urging him to unite with the Boers in opposing British expansion. This letter was handed to Mr F. C. Selous, the well-known hunter, to translate from Dutch to the Matabele tongue. This gentleman, strangely enough, in later years became

one of Mr Rhodes' principal agents in founding the British colony. The letter was rather long, and was intended to arouse Lobengula's suspicions of the British. It began as follows: "Now you must have heard that the English took away our country, the Transvaal, or, as they say, annexed it. We then talked nicely for four years and begged for our country. But no; when an Englishman once has your property in his hands he is like an ape with its hands full of pumpkin seeds. If you don't beat him to death he will never leave go. And thus all our nice talk did not help us at all. Then the English commenced to arrest us because we were dissatisfied, and that caused the shooting and the fighting. It was then that the English first found that it would be better to give us back our country."

The letter proceeded in this ranting fashion for some time, and concluded with the suggestion that the Boers of the Transvaal should "live in friendliness with Lobengula as they lived in friendship with his father, Umsiligaas; and such must be their friendship that so long as there is one Boer and one Matabele living they must remain friends." This anxiety to live on good terms with the native tribes reads rather strangely when the wars of extermination which the Burghers of the Transvaal waged upon the Basutos, the Zulus, and the Bechuanas are borne in mind.

Towards the end of 1887 Mr Rhodes received the serious news that the Boers dwelling in the Zoutpansberg district of the Transvaal were organising a trek on a large scale which had Matabeleland for its objective. This served to show him that if he meant to move he must move quickly, else he would find himself forestalled.

Fortunately for him, and for the Empire as well, he found a willing listener to his plans and ambitions in Sir Hercules Robinson. The High Commissioner, however, knew perfectly well that the Imperial Government would not consent to any further responsibilities being assumed by Great Britain in South Africa, so that the hopes of a British protectorate up to, and possibly beyond, the Zambesi, which had been Mr Rhodes' first idea, had perforce to be abandoned. His experience in Bechuanaland, when first the Cape Government and then the Imperial authorities refused to undertake any responsibility with regard to that country, convinced Mr Rhodes that he must find some other means for obtaining and administering his empire in the north. The British Empire has not been built by its rulers, but in spite of them!

What was this other way to be? That was the matter which Mr Rhodes was revolving in his mind when the Transvaal president took the step forward which compelled Rhodes to stop thinking and get to work, if he was to "head off" the Boers from the north, as he was fully determined on doing. This step of President Kruger's was the sending up of a Transvaal consul to the court of King Lobengula. The real mission of this official, of course, was to pave the way for a Boer inroad into Matabele country.

Rhodes at once had an interview with the High Commissioner. Sir Hercules Robinson could not hold out hope of the British Government proclaiming a protectorate over Lobengula's country, as Mr Rhodes desired. The latter was not to be denied, however, and at once proposed an alternative to the formal proclamation of a protectorate. "Suppose," he said in effect to the High Commissioner,—"suppose I

were to obtain from Lobengula a guarantee that, in the event of him at any time deciding to ask for the protection of some Great Power, the first offer of this nature should be made to Great Britain—would the Imperial authorities act on that?"

Sir Hercules Robinson thought over this for a short time—he saw the reasonableness of this proposition—and at length said that he believed that Downing Street might be brought to assent. He was as firmly convinced as Mr Rhodes himself that Great Britain and Cape Colony should by rights have the control of the interior, but he knew the supineness and short-sightedness which prevails in the Government offices in London, and did not hold out any very glowing hopes of success. Fortunately the Colonial Office at the moment was a little more alive than usual to the necessities of the situation, and the Imperial Government at once agreed to Mr Rhodes' scheme in the event of Lobengula giving the required guarantee.

This was a great point gained. With the willing co-operation of the High Commissioner, without which he might have laboured in vain, Mr Rhodes cast about him for a suitable person to act as envoy to the Matabele king. Such a one was not easy to find, but at length Mr Moffat, the Assistant-Commissioner of Bechuanaland, was selected for the mission. It must be said at once that he conducted his task with great credit. He found Lobengula at his principal kraal of Gu-Buluwayo, and after much palaver and negotiation succeeded in obtaining from the dusky monarch the written assurance that in the event of his deciding at any time to place his country under the protection of any other state, Great Britain was to have the right of pre-emption. This agreement

with Lobengula is generally known as the Moffat Treaty. It prepared the way for the British colonisation of the interior, and effectually prevented President Kruger from obtaining any real hold on Matabeleland.

This much being gained, how was the country to be brought under white control? Mr Rhodes debated that problem with himself for many months. Clearly it was hopeless to expect any further help from the Imperial Government, while, even had the Cape been sufficiently strong financially to control that vast region, the inclination to do so was wanting. At this juncture Mr Rhodes thought of India. India, he reasoned, had been saved for the British Empire by means of private enterprise at a period when the Government would have scouted the idea of undertaking any responsibility in that direction. Why should not history repeat itself with regard to the interior of South Africa?

Mr Rhodes was convinced that herein lay the true solution of the question that had been troubling him for so long; and finding that Mr Beit agreed with him, he at once set about getting a concession to search for minerals in the country of the Matabele. He was not the first to make this move. The discovery of the rich Witwatersrand goldfield, and the knowledge that gold existed in some quantities on the west coast of Africa, had led to many adventurous prospectors turning longing eyes to the country north of the Limpopo. Was it likely, they argued, that in the whole of South Africa the only valuable goldfield was the one which had been stumbled on by accident in the Witwatersrand district of the Transvaal? Gold was found in other parts of the Transvaal farther

north than Johannesburg, and travellers in the north had brought back tales of a rich gold country which had been successfully worked by a long-vanished race.

It is necessary to bear in mind, however, that at this time, 1888, while the existence of gold and other valuable mineral deposits in Lobengula's dominions was strongly suspected, there was no direct proof that they existed in anything like payable quantities. A small goldfield within the district known as the Tati Concessions, situated in Matabeleland, though some eight years previously it had been added to Cape Colony, had long been profitably worked, and this added weight to the supposition that, in some portions of the country under the sway of the Matabele, goldfields as rich as that around Johannesburg might exist. Many small groups of adventurous speculators, therefore, had at various times sought permission from Lobengula to search for gold and other metals in different parts of his country. To all of them, however, save one, which will be referred to later, Lobengula had returned a curt refusal.

It was to press for this concession of the sole right to search for mineral deposits in the whole of the Matabele country that Mr Rhodes, in conjunction with his ardent supporter, Mr Beit, decided in the early part of 1888 to send up an envoy, Mr Fry, a well-known hunter and explorer, to the king of the Matabele. Unfortunately Mr Fry was unable to carry through the negotiations, being seized with an illness at Buluwayo which soon after proved fatal.

The amount of success which he had met with, however, convinced Mr Rhodes that he was on the high-road to achieving his object, and accordingly another

and larger expedition was equipped, and sent up to the kraal of the Matabele king. This expedition was under the command of three very able men : Mr C. D. Rudd, Mr Rhodes' early partner at Kimberley ; Mr Rochefort Maguire, who had been one of Rhodes' closest friends at Oxford ; and Mr F. R. Thompson, a gentleman with an intimate knowledge of Lobengula and his country, who is known throughout South Africa by the cognomen of "Matabele" Thompson.

These three, after some very anxious moments, managed to carry through their negotiations with Lobengula, and on October 30, 1888, a document was signed conceding to the three envoys and their representatives the sole right to search for minerals in the regions over which Lobengula ruled. In return for the concession Lobengula was to receive a monthly payment of £100 sterling in British currency, together with 1000 Martini-Henry rifles and 100,000 rounds of ball cartridge, and a steam gunboat to patrol the Zambesi river. The gunboat, it may be mentioned here, was never delivered, for Lobengula elected to receive a sum of £500 in its stead. With regard to the rifles and cartridges, it is a matter for regret that the concessionaires should have been so ill-advised as to offer these, or to assent to Lobengula receiving them. They might have been fairly certain that a warlike tribe like the Matabele would not long be content to use their newly acquired weapons for sport, but would sigh for nobler quarry to attack.

A notable paragraph in Lobengula's concession was that which authorised the concessionaires to exclude from the Matabele kingdom all persons seeking concessions of land or mining rights ; while the Mata-

bele king promised to grant no such rights from that date without the previous consent of the present concessionaires.

It has been contended in various interested quarters that Lobengula was “bluffed” into signing this document, and that he did so without fully realising what he was doing. Any one who knew the crafty old king is fully aware that he was by no means a fool, and that he rarely took any step without fully weighing the consequences. Each sentence of the concession was carefully read over to him in the Matabele tongue by a qualified interpreter, and Lobengula pondered each one carefully before showing by a curt nod of the head that he agreed to it.

It seemed to him, and to many others at that time, that he had driven an extremely good bargain with the three Englishmen. He was to receive a large annual sum of money, together with a supply of rifles and ammunition, for the right to work minerals which were at that time not really known to exist. The three Englishmen at his kraal, and the master-brain behind them, however, knew what they were doing, and would not have given away so much had they not been convinced that they would recoup themselves in the future.

Now that he had gained this concession from Lobengula, Mr Rhodes found himself virtually, if not actually, the ruling power of Matabeleland; and though in some measure he had been forced into this position against his will (for there can be no doubt that at this period Mr Rhodes would by far have preferred that the British Government should have established a protectorate over the country), it cannot be said that the position was altogether displeasing to

him. But he did not desire to exercise sovereign rights over Matabeleland. All he wanted was the power to colonise the country, and to retain it for Great Britain until such time as the trend of events forced the Imperial Government to take up its administration.

Having gained the concession from Lobengula, Rhodes' next step was to procure a charter for his company from the British Government. It was decided that the capital of this company should be a million sterling, a sum that was then regarded as ample for the carrying out of the powers it had received from Lobengula. Messrs Rhodes and Beit could have provided this capital themselves, had they so desired, and in addition there was the De Beers Company, which guaranteed the sum of £200,000 in return for the exclusive right to work any diamond mines that might be discovered in the country, and the Consolidated Goldfields Company of Johannesburg, which likewise was prepared to take up a substantial interest in the new country. Mr Rhodes' vast scheme was not likely to fail for want of money, even though the British public refused to invest a single farthing in it.

Before Mr Rhodes was able to apply for his charter he found it necessary to deal with the single concession previously granted by Lobengula, to which reference has been made earlier in this chapter. This concession was held by a small group of British speculators, who, after some negotiation, were prevailed upon to amalgamate their interests with those of Mr Rhodes.

Apart from the glamour of constructing an empire in an almost virgin country, a point of view that

would be regarded with but small interest by the majority of business men, this company was a very speculative venture in which to embark one's money. So far as was known of its mineral wealth the country might have been as rich as El Dorado, or, on the other hand, it might have been as barren as the Sahara. The probabilities were that the country could in a few years be made to pay its way, but they were probabilities only, and none could say with the least authority what the real value of the newly acquired country was.

Mr Rhodes was perfectly convinced in his own mind that in this vast territory, some 174,000 miles in extent, a great future outlet for the surplus population of Great Britain would be afforded, and therefore he never wavered in his determination to bring the land under the British flag. Whether it is right or wrong to acquire in this manner the land of a native population, and to throw it open for white colonisation, must always remain a debatable point, and to discuss it would be out of place in this present work. Mr Rhodes' view of the matter is that the African natives, as weaker races manifestly unfit to govern the land they hold, must sooner or later give way before the irresistible advance of the stronger white people. It is the old doctrine of the survival of the fittest—a brutal theory, no doubt, but one impossible to alter or amend. Whatever proves itself to be the best and the fittest to exist must and will exist, and, by the sheer weight of its greater fitness to continue in existence, will crush out all opposition on the part of its weaker rivals. If Central Africa, or any other portion of the earth's surface, proves habitable for white men, the aborigines must some day or other—maybe to-morrow

or maybe not for generations to come—go to the wall, and become “hewers of wood and drawers of water” for their more highly developed brethren. Not all the well-meaning philanthropists who have ever awoke the slumbering echoes of Exeter Hall with their eloquence can prevent it.

If, however, it is impossible for native races to remain for all time the supreme overlords of vast tracts of country, the white men destined to supersede them can at least see to it that the natives are treated with kindness, and are allowed to retain their old laws and customs so long as these are not of a harmful or demoralising nature. This, we say unhesitatingly, has been Mr Rhodes' aim throughout his whole career. He long ago recognised, as all who come into contact with them must recognise, that the South African natives are not fit to remain in independence and unfettered, and he has at times enunciated this view with a clearness and vigour that have brought him into conflict with that blundering, though doubtless well-meaning, little group of persons styling themselves “The Aborigines Protection Society.” But it cannot be said that Mr Rhodes has ever treated the natives under his control otherwise than kindly, gently, and fairly. Throughout the length and breadth of Africa there are no more contented natives to be found than those occupying the compounds at Kimberley. It was Mr Rhodes who engineered through the Cape Parliament, in the teeth of strenuous opposition, the Glen Grey Act, by which the sale of intoxicating liquors to natives within the limits of Cape Colony is strictly forbidden, and it is a monument to Mr Rhodes' desire to protect the natives under British

rule against the vices which civilisation brings in its wake.

Early in 1889 Mr Rhodes sailed for England for the purpose of placing the company which he had formed to exploit Matabeleland on a firm basis, and to obtain a charter of incorporation from the Government. In both these tasks he was successful. At this time there was an enlightened perception on the part of the Imperial Government, as welcome as it was rare, which enabled it to appreciate Mr Rhodes' lucid arguments for the interior of South Africa coming under British rule; and if the Colonial Office was not disposed to undertake any financial risk or responsibility in the matter, it at any rate refrained from throwing any obstacles in the way of Mr Rhodes obtaining his charter.

The directors of the company, as at first selected by Mr Rhodes, were Mr Alfred Beit, Mr Rochefort Maguire, Lord Giford, V.C., Mr George Cawson, and himself. At the suggestion of the Government three other gentlemen, unconnected with Mr Rhodes and his work, were added to the board of directors, in order to give some guarantee that the huge powers about to be placed in the hands of the company should not be abused. Mr Rhodes saw at once the reasonableness of this proceeding, and after consideration the Duke of Abercorn, the Duke of Fife, and Earl Grey became directors of the British South Africa Company, as the new corporation was christened. These three gentlemen ranked in every way as equal with the directors originally selected, with the important reservation that they did not retire from the board in rotation as was the case with the others. They were in many respects in an analogous

position to the life governors of the De Beers Consolidated Company.

The charter was ultimately granted on October 29, 1889, just twelve months after the original concession had been gained from Lobengula. By this charter the British South Africa Company, around which such heated controversy was to rage in the near future, came into being. The charter is a lengthy document composed of thirty-five articles, and is much too important to be treated at the end of a chapter as lengthy as this one has grown. It may be mentioned that, despite the very speculative undertaking of the Chartered Company (to give it its shorter and more popular name), and the possibility that no minerals might be found in Matabeleland in quantities sufficient to pay for the cost of working them, such shares as were actually offered in the open market in London were eagerly snapped up.

CHAPTER IX.

MR RHODES AND THE HOME RULE PARTY.

BEFORE passing on to the discussion of the charter which was granted to the British South Africa Company, and the founding of the state now known as Rhodesia, it is necessary to pause for a moment in order to discuss an incident in Mr Rhodes' life which perhaps has, at one time and another, excited more attention and comment than it deserved. This was the gift of £10,000 to the funds of the Irish Home Rule Party. So many exaggerated and fictitious details have been gradually woven into this story that it is rather hard to get at the truth. An authoritative account of what actually passed between Mr Rhodes and Mr Parnell has not been published up to the present time, and I propose to give it here.

In 1887 Mr Rhodes paid a flying visit to England on purely private matters of no particular interest. On his return to the Cape towards the end of the year, he had for fellow-passenger on the boat Mr Swift MacNeill, M.P., a prominent supporter of Mr Parnell in the House of Commons, and then on his way to Africa for the benefit of his health. Mr Rhodes got into conversation with Mr MacNeill, and

naturally the Home Rule Bill of 1886 was discussed by them. Mr Rhodes, it should be said, had taken up a very decided attitude on this question, for in the scheme to give Ireland a limited measure of Home Rule he saw, or fancied that he saw, the germ of Imperial Federation, by which at some future time every self-governing colony and dependency should be represented at Westminster, and the British Empire become an empire in deed as well as in name.

Mr Rhodes' dream of Imperial Federation, which he may still live to see come into being, was that every colony should contribute a sum in proportion to its revenue towards the cost of maintaining and defending the Empire, and should be represented in the Imperial House of Commons by a varying number of representatives according to the amount it contributed. In the granting of Home Rule to Ireland he perceived an excellent opportunity for commencing this other and larger scheme.

According to this scheme of Mr Rhodes, then, every self-governing colony was to have its own legislative assembly, from which delegates, varying in number, as has been mentioned, should be sent to the Imperial Parliament at Westminster. In a Parliament thus constituted, affairs of Imperial concern only would be dealt with, purely local matters being left to the consideration of the local assemblies. Of course in this scheme no place is found for the House of Lords. Like most colonials, he fails to see why the accident of birth should give a man, who may be the veriest blockhead in the world, the right to legislate on affairs of Empire which he has not the mental capacity to understand, far less to appreciate.

Mr Gladstone's bill, however, had the effect of

instantly causing Rhodes to withdraw his support from the measure, for the reasons which have been already alluded to in chapter vi. He regarded self-government for Ireland as a means of drawing the bonds of empire closer together, but the clause in the bill of 1886 which proposed to exclude the Irish members from Westminster, and the ready assent with which the Irish members under Mr Parnell accepted this condition, roused a fear in his mind, as indeed it did in the minds of most, that it was not a limited measure of Home Rule that the Irish members, if not their Radical allies, really aimed at, but absolute separation from the Empire. Throughout his whole political career, and indeed before it commenced, Mr Rhodes has championed the right of the self-governing colonies to manage their own affairs without interference from Downing Street; but he has steadfastly insisted upon ultimate British supremacy. It may be pointed out that it was this question of the retention of the Irish members at Westminster that led Mr Chamberlain to resign his seat in Mr Gladstone's Cabinet, and to withdraw from the ranks of the Radical party.

Rhodes expressed his views as outlined above very plainly to Mr Swift MacNeill, who was pleased to find such a prominent colonial politician supporting the Home Rule party, even though he differed from it on matters of detail. He endeavoured to assure Mr Rhodes that the last thing the Irish members desired or would assent to would be the total separation of Ireland from the British Empire. He was not altogether successful in removing the doubts from Mr Rhodes' mind, though the latter was very pleased to hear him enunciate these views.

Mr Swift MacNeill remained at the Cape for some months, during which time he had further conversations with Mr Rhodes on this subject. In one of these talks Rhodes expressed his willingness to subscribe handsomely to the funds of the Home Rule party if he could be authoritatively assured that a proportion of the Irish members would be retained at Westminster, and that there was no intention on the part of Mr Parnell or his party to bring about the complete detachment of Ireland from the remainder of the Empire. On both these points Mr Swift MacNeill gave him the amplest assurances, and he promised to lay his views before Mr Parnell on his return to London.

This he did at the earliest possible moment. Mr Parnell was much gratified to hear of Mr Rhodes' active interest in the Home Rule question, and of his willingness to give a large donation to the party funds. Mr Rhodes' idea of using the measure for self-government for Ireland as a stepping-stone towards the ultimate federation of the states of the Empire was entirely new to the Irish leader, as indeed it was to most people who were not in the habit of looking so far into the future as the great African statesman was.

It was on the question of the retention or non-retention of the Irish members at Westminster that Mr Parnell differed most strongly from Mr Rhodes at this time. The Irish leader held most firmly to the belief that, if Ireland had her own legislature, she should not also be represented in the British Parliament. If, however, the Irish members were to be retained at Westminster, then he would not consent to their numbers being reduced from their existing figure, 103, to 34, as Mr Rhodes had suggested. This

latter number had been fixed by Mr Rhodes as being in direct proportion to the annual revenue to be paid by Ireland to the Imperial Treasury. Mr Parnell declared that it must be either all or nothing. Either the whole of the Irish members were to retain their seats in the British House of Commons or else none of them was to do so: he would not admit of any reduction in the number of his followers.

The line of divergence between Rhodes and Parnell seemed too great and too complete for them ever to agree, but Mr Swift MacNeill set about the task of bringing the two men face to face if possible, so that by amicable discussion they might arrive at some compromise which both could accept. In this he was successful. When Mr Rhodes came to London again in the early summer of 1888, he was visited by Mr Parnell at his hotel. This meeting is peculiarly interesting, for the two men had much in common. The discussion was initiated by Mr Rhodes, who laid down the conditions on which he was prepared to give his support to the Irish party in its efforts to obtain a limited measure of self-government for Ireland. To these conditions Mr Parnell listened in silence, with an occasional shake of the head when he dissented from Mr Rhodes' words.

The conditions which Rhodes suggested were, briefly, as follows: Home Rule for Ireland was to be regarded as the first step towards the ultimate federation of the various component parts of the Empire to form a Parliament which should be in the truest sense of the word Imperial. With this end in view, a limited number of the Irish members, which Mr Rhodes fixed at thirty-four for reasons before mentioned, should retain their seats at West-

minster, and should be independent of the Irish Legislature in Dublin. Further, he urged, a clause should be inserted in any future Home Rule bill presented to the House of Commons, to permit any British colony to claim direct representation in the British Parliament on its offering to bear its share in providing funds for Imperial purposes. This last was a condition on which Mr Rhodes laid so great stress that he refused to accept any modification of it.

When Rhodes had finished and it came to Mr Parnell to speak, the Irish leader stated at once that though he had up till that time been much against the retention of the Irish members at Westminster, he had been brought round by Mr Rhodes' arguments to see that it would be for the best that these members should retain their seats. With regard, however, to the proposed reduction in their numbers, he could not accept it on any consideration whatever. "Until I have got all I want from Mr Gladstone," said Mr Parnell—"and this includes the full control of the Irish police and judiciary—I could not afford to assent to this drastic reduction in my strength. After that time," he went on, "I should be quite willing that the question of the over-representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament should be debated." As for the permissive clause to enable any self-governing colony to send representatives to the House of Commons, he would accept that condition cheerfully.

"Would you be prepared to move that this clause be inserted in any Home Rule bill that might come before the House of Commons?" asked Mr Rhodes.

Mr Parnell hesitated for a few moments before answering this question, for he was not certain how

a section of his followers might like the idea. At length he said that while he would not be prepared to move such an amendment himself, or to promise that any member of his party should move it, yet if such a clause were moved from some other part of the House, he and his party would not raise any objection to it, even if they did not give it their active support.

“On what basis,” next asked Mr Parnell, “would you suggest that the large colonies should be permitted to send representatives to the Imperial Parliament?”

“On the basis of the amount of their annual contribution to the Imperial Exchequer,” answered Mr Rhodes, who, while holding strongly to the doctrine that there should be no taxation without representation, believed that the converse of this, no representation without taxation, was equally to be desired.

After some more discussion on matters of minor importance, the interview ended with the understanding that Mr Rhodes should write fully to Parnell, setting forth the conditions on which he was prepared to subscribe to the funds of the Home Rule party. The following is a copy of Rhodes’ letter as originally written. A draft of this letter was submitted to the Irish leader before it was finally delivered to him, and at Mr Parnell’s request certain passages, here given in italics, were deleted or amended :—

“WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL,
LONDON, S.W., *June 19, 1888.*

“C. S. PARNELL, Esq., M.P.

“DEAR SIR,—On my way to the Cape last autumn I had the opportunity of frequent conversation with Mr Swift MacNeill upon the subject of Home Rule

for Ireland. I then told him that I had long had a sympathy with the Irish demand for self-government, but that there were certain portions of Mr Gladstone's bill which appeared open to the gravest objections. The exclusion of the Irish members from Westminster seemed rightly to be considered, both in England and the Colonies, as a step in the direction of pure separation, while the tribute clauses were, on the face of them, degrading to Ireland, by placing it in the position of a conquered province, and were opposed to the first principle of constitutional government, by sanctioning taxation without representation. It has been frequently stated that the hearty acquiescence of the Irish members in these proposals gave good grounds for believing that they were really working for complete separation from England. Mr MacNeill assures me that this was not the case; that naturally the first object of the Irish members was to obtain self-government for Ireland; and that when this, their main object, seemed secure, it did not become them to criticise or cavil at the terms of the grant made to them. Moreover, he said, he believed that the Irish members were only too anxious to support Irish representation at Westminster, should a suitable scheme containing the necessary provisions be brought forward.

“(Lord Rosebery, in his recent speech at Inverness, has suggested a possible solution. He there proposed a reduced Irish representation at Westminster: this representation could be based upon the amount of the Irish contribution to the Imperial revenue.

“And though it seems illogical that Irish members should vote on English local topics, still, taking into consideration the large indirect contribution that Ire-

land would make in connection with trade and commerce, and that the English people are not prepared at present to accept any vital change of their Constitution, it would appear more workable that this reduced number of Irish members should speak and vote, even on purely English local topics, than that at doubtful intervals they should be called upon to withdraw into an outside lobby.)

“With (some such) safeguards—and they must be effective safeguards—for the maintenance of Imperial unity, I am of the opinion that the Home Rule granted should be a reality and not a sham.

“If the Irish are to be conciliated and benefited by the grant of self-government, they should be trusted, and trusted entirely. Otherwise the application of popular institutions to Ireland must be deemed impracticable, and the only alternative is the administration of the country as a Crown colony, which plan, in the present state of public opinion, is totally impossible.

“My experience in the Cape Colony leads me to believe that even the Ulster question is one which would soon settle itself. Since the Colonial Office has allowed questions at the Cape to be settled by the Cape Parliament, not only has the attachment to the Imperial tie been immensely strengthened, but the Dutch, who form the majority of the population, have shown a greatly increased consideration for the sentiments of the English members of the community. It seems only reasonable to suppose that in an Irish Parliament similar consideration would be given to the sentiments of that portion of the inhabitants which is at present out of sympathy with the national movement.

“ I will frankly add that my interest in the Irish question has been heightened by the fact that in it I see a possibility of the commencement of changes which will eventually mould and weld together all parts of the British Empire.

“ The English are a conservative race, and like to move slowly and, as it were, experimentally. At present there can be no doubt that the time of Parliament is overcrowded with the discussion of trivial and local affairs.

“ Imperial matters have to stand their chance of a hearing alongside of railway and tram bills. Evidently it must be a function of modern legislation to delegate an enormous number of questions which now occupy the time of Parliament to district councils or local bodies.

“ Mr Chamberlain recognised this fact in his Radical programme of 1885, and the need daily grows more urgent. Now the removal of Irish affairs to an Irish Council (*Legislature*) would be a practical experimental step in the direction of lessening the burden upon the central deliberative and legislative machine.

“ But side by side with the tendency of decentralisation for local affairs, there is growing up a feeling for the necessity of greater union in Imperial matters. The primary tie which binds our Empire together is the national one of self-defence. The Colonies are already commencing to co-operate with, and contribute to, the mother country for this purpose. But if they are to contribute permanently and beneficially, they will have to be represented in the Imperial Parliament, where the disposition of their contribution must be decided upon.

“ I do not think that it can be denied that the

presence of two or three Australian members in the House would in recent years have prevented much misunderstanding upon such questions as the New Hebrides, New Guinea, and Chinese immigration. Now an (*reduced*) Irish representation at Westminster (*with numbers proportionate to Ireland's Imperial contribution*) would, without making any vital change in the English constitution, furnish a precedent by which the self-governing colonies could from time to time, as they expressed a desire to contribute to Imperial expenditure, be incorporated with the Imperial Legislature. You will perhaps say that I am making the Irish question a stalking-horse for a scheme of Imperial Federation, but if so, I am at least placing Ireland in the forefront of the battle.

“The question is, moreover, one in which I take a deep interest, and I shall be glad if you can assure (*tell*) me that Mr MacNeill is not mistaken in the impression he conveyed to me, and that you and your party would be prepared to give your hearty support and approval to a Home Rule Bill containing provisions for the continuance of Irish representation at Westminster. Such a declaration would afford great satisfaction to myself and others, and would enable us to give our full and active support to your cause and your party.

“(I shall be happy to contribute to the funds of the party to the extent of £10,000. I am also, under the circumstances, authorised to offer you a further sum of £1000 from Mr John Morrogh, an Irish resident of Kimberley, South Africa.)—Yours faithfully,

“C. J. RHODES.”

To this letter, as softened down by the omission of

the words and sentences given in italics, Mr Parnell returned an answer, dated June 23, 1888, and written from the House of Commons, in which he said that he was much obliged for Mr Rhodes' letter of the 19th inst., which confirmed the very interesting account given him at Avondale some time before by Mr Swift MacNeill as to his interviews and conversations with him on the subject of Home Rule for Ireland.

He said at once and frankly that he thought Mr Rhodes had correctly judged the exclusion of the Irish members from Westminster to have been a defect in the Home Rule measure of 1886, and further, that the proposed exclusion might have given some colour to the accusations so freely made against the bill, that it had a separatist tendency. He said this while strongly asserting and believing that the measure itself was accepted by the Irish people without any afterthought of the kind, and with an earnest desire to work it out in the same spirit in which it was offered—a spirit of cordial goodwill and trust, a desire to let bygones be bygones, and a determination to accept it as a final and satisfactory settlement of the long-standing dispute and trouble between Great Britain and Ireland.

He was very glad to find that Mr Rhodes considered the measure of Home Rule to be granted to Ireland should be thoroughgoing, and should give her complete control over her own affairs without reservation, and he cordially agreed with his opinion that there should be at the same time effective safeguards for the maintenance of Imperial unity.

Mr Rhodes' conclusion as to the only alternative for Home Rule was also entirely his own, for he had

long felt that the continuance of the present semi-constitutional system was quite impracticable.

But returning to the question of the retention of the Irish members at Westminster, Mr Parnell's views upon the point, the probabilities of the future, and the bearing of this subject upon the question of Imperial Federation. His own feeling upon the matter was that if Mr Gladstone included in his next Home Rule measure provisions for such retention, the Irish party should cheerfully concur in them and accept them with goodwill and good faith, with the intention of taking their share in the Imperial partnership. He believed also that, in the event stated, this would be the case, and that the Irish people would cheerfully accept the duties and responsibilities assigned to them, and would justly value the position given them in the Imperial system.

He was convinced that it would be the highest statesmanship on Mr Gladstone's part to devise a feasible plan for the continued presence of the Irish members at Westminster, and from his observation of public events and opinion since 1885, he was sure that Mr Gladstone was fully alive to the importance of the matter, and that there could be no doubt that the next measure of autonomy for Ireland would contain the provisions which Mr Rhodes rightly deemed of such moment. It did not come so much within Mr Parnell's province to express a full opinion on Imperial Federation, but he quite agreed with Rhodes that the continued Irish representation at Westminster would immensely facilitate such a step, to which the contrary provision would have been a bar. Undoubtedly this was a matter which should be dealt with in accordance with the opinion of

the Colonies themselves, and if they should desire to share in the cost of Imperial matters, as certainly they did then in the responsibilities, and should express a wish for representation at Westminster, he quite thought it should be accorded them, and that public opinion in these islands would unanimously concur in the necessary constitutional modifications. This letter made it clear that Mr Rhodes' views regarding Home Rule, both for Ireland and the other portions of the Empire, were shared in to a large extent by the Irish leader.

It will be seen from the above summary of Mr Parnell's letter that he quite accepted Mr Rhodes' conditions, though he refrained from any expressions committing the Irish party to a definite line of action on the question of Imperial Federation. At any rate Mr Rhodes was quite satisfied with the letter of the leader of the Irish party, and the day after he received it he sent the following answer:—

"WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL,
LONDON, S.W., 24th June 1888.

"DEAR MR PARNELL,—I have to thank you for your letter of the 23rd inst., the contents of which have given me much pleasure.

"I feel sure that your cordial approval of the retention of Irish representation at Westminster will gain you support in many quarters from which it has hitherto been withheld.

"As a proof of my deep and sincere interest in the question, and as I believe that the action of the Irish party, on the basis which you have stated, will lead, not to disintegration but really to a closer union of the Empire, making it an Empire in reality

and not in name only, I am happy to offer a contribution to the extent of £10,000 to the funds of your party. I am also authorised to offer you a further sum of £1000 from Mr John Morrogh, an Irish resident in Kimberley, South Africa.—Believe me, yours faithfully,

C. J. RHODES."

These letters will have shown clearly Mr Rhodes' real object in making this handsome donation to the funds of the Home Rule party. It was because he believed that this measure would have tended to bring Ireland into greater sympathy with the rest of the Empire, and in order to further his idea of Imperial Federation, that he took this step, and not, as has been alleged, to gain the support of the Irish party towards his obtaining a charter to work the goldfields of Lobengula's country. Indeed it may be said without fear of denial that the question of using the Irish party in order to bring about this end never occurred to Mr Rhodes. For one thing, at the time that he made his offer he had not taken any steps towards the realisation of his northern expansion schemes, and it was not until four months after he handed his cheque to Mr Parnell that the Rhodes-Rudd concession was obtained from the Matabele king. This slander, therefore, is disposed of, once and for all.

At different times there have been rumours that about the period when Mr Rhodes gave this money to the Irish party he also gave a sum of £5000 to the Liberal party funds, so as to gain their support in the House of Commons for the carrying out of his projects in South Africa. This subject will be dealt with fully in a subsequent chapter of this book.

At a later period, in March 1890, Mr Parnell wrote to Mr Rhodes, who was then in Cape Town, telling him that he had been visiting Mr Gladstone at Hawarden Castle, and that the Liberal leader was then engaged in drafting his second Home Rule Bill in case of the victory of his party at the approaching general election. Included in this measure, said Mr Parnell, was to be the retention of a reduced number of Irish members at Westminster, so that Rhodes had gained the point for which he had contended so strongly.

Before passing from this subject, one cannot refrain from commenting on the attitude of the Irish members of Parliament towards Mr Rhodes, especially in recent years. One would have thought that, having accepted from him this large sum of money, they would at least have refrained from biting the hand that had fed them. So far from this being the case, on every occasion that arises the Irish party goes out of its way to vilify Mr Rhodes and his works. Such, it is to be presumed, is Irish gratitude for assistance with influence and purse at a time when their cause sorely needed outside aid.

CHAPTER X.

THE FOUNDING OF A NEW COLONY.

THE charter granted to the British South Africa Company is an interesting document, but by no means a unique one. In comparatively recent years three other such charters have been granted—those of the Borneo Company, the British East Africa Company, and the Royal Niger Company. Of these three the first only is in existence at the present time. The two others have been revoked, and their administrative powers assumed by the Imperial Government.

The charter of the British South Africa Company will be found *in extenso* at the end of this volume, but a brief examination of some of its leading clauses and provisions may well be made at this point.

The first section of the charter is at once interesting and instructive. In it are set out the boundaries over which the company was to have control. The territory in question is defined as being “the region of South Africa lying immediately to the north of British Bechuanaland, and to the north and west of the South African Republic, and to the west of the Portuguese dominions.” One very significant omission is to be noticed. No boundary to the north is assigned to the territories placed under

the control of the Chartered Company. This was a point for which Mr Rhodes had a very stiff fight with Lord Knutsford, at that time Colonial Secretary. The Imperial Government was strongly of the opinion that the sphere of influence of the British South Africa Company should be bounded on the north by the Zambesi river, and certain of those working with Mr Rhodes also urged upon him the necessity of accepting this condition; but he would not hear of it.

Although the territories north of the Zambesi were almost entirely unknown at this time, the reports of explorers, from Livingstone onwards, seemed to show that the heart of Central Africa was not a "white man's country." Moreover, it was highly problematical whether minerals in payable quantities would be found in that region. Mr Rhodes, however, maintained his ground, and did all in his power to have the boundary to the north left undefined. The acquisition of the country as far north as the Zambesi was a great step forward towards the accomplishment of the task which he had set himself some years previously. It was by no means the final achievement of it. "All red!" he had said that day in Kimberley when he waved his hand across the map of Africa from south to north; and now he wanted the power to push on in the future through the countries of Barotseland and Nyasaland, beyond the eastern boundary of the Congo Free State, through the kingdom of Uganda, to Upper Egypt and the head-waters of the Nile. Such was the stupendous dream of Cecil Rhodes at the time that he applied for the royal charter for his British South Africa Company.

Later events have shown that this "all-red"

ribbon of territory from Cape Colony to Egypt was not destined to be. For that we have to thank, chiefly, the supine attitude of the Colonial and Foreign Offices, by which other nations were permitted to step in before us. The meeting of German East Africa and the Congo Free State has prevented this "all-red" route from south to north, but there is a grandeur about the conception of such a scheme that must appeal to all intelligent people of the British race whose eyes are not blinded by prejudice and spleen.

With this future expansion beyond the Zambesi in view, Rhodes about this time, 1889, entered into negotiations with a company which virtually controlled the region then known as Nyasaland, and to-day recognised as the British Central Africa Protectorate. This company was the African Lakes Corporation, a body having its head offices at Glasgow, possessing large powers of administration over this country as well as maintaining an extensive trading connection along the Zambesi and Shiré rivers.

The affairs of this company had got into rather a bad way financially when Rhodes came to their assistance. In return for a guarantee of a large sum for working capital, to be provided by the Chartered Company, he obtained the promise of the African Lakes Corporation to hand over their administrative rights over Nyasaland to the British South Africa Company. By this means the latter company, as soon as it received its charter, would become the controlling power over this country, and the African Lakes Corporation would become a trading company pure and simple.

In the end Rhodes was successful in obtaining his own way in the matter of the northern boundary of

his company's territories, and it was left undefined in the charter.

Passing on to the other sections of the charter, number 6 next demands notice. This provides that the company shall always remain British in character and domicile, and shall have its principal offices in Great Britain, while the directors and principal officers in South Africa shall always be either natural-born British subjects or persons who have been naturalised as such. This was, of course, a highly necessary and proper condition to impose, and indeed before the charter was drafted Rhodes had given a pledge to this effect to the Colonial Secretary.

Another of Mr Rhodes' promises is to be seen in clause 12, which stipulates that the Chartered Company shall regulate the traffic in spirits and other intoxicating liquors for sale to natives within its dominions. Mr Rhodes has always held very strong views on the question of the sale of intoxicants to natives. His Glen Grey Act for Cape Colony is an example of this. He himself is a temperate man, though not a total abstainer, and the cause of temperance in any part of the world has always found a staunch supporter in him. He has seen for himself the terrible effects which the unrestricted sale of spirits has had upon the native tribes of South Africa, and has ever been of the firm opinion that such traffic should be forbidden by law. He had considerable difficulty, however, in impressing his views upon the Cape House of Assembly at the time that he introduced the Glen Grey Act, which has been the saviour of the native population of Cape Colony. Those who support the Dutch of South Africa against the British on every occasion will be interested to hear that it was the

Dutch section of the community that fought tooth and nail, to use a colloquialism, against the Glen Grey Act becoming law. The official records of the period amply bear out this statement.

Clause 14 of the charter is in many ways one of the most important. It provides that the administration of justice to the natives of the country, about to be placed under the administration of the British South Africa Company, be conducted with a due regard for the ancient customs and laws of the tribes to which the parties belong—so far, that is, as the said customs and laws are not in direct antagonism to public order or morality. This is a most necessary proviso, and one that has always to be borne in mind when dealing with native tribes. There was a tendency a few years ago among colonial governors and administrators to bind the natives under their control to every legal regulation which was applied to the white inhabitants of the district. Rhodes was one of the first to recognise that this was the wrong way to govern native races. The average savage manifests an intense devotion to the laws and traditions of his tribe and country, and much mischief has been caused from time to time by the ill-advised efforts of officials in charge of semi-civilised nations to abolish at one swoop all the laws and traditions and to substitute those regulations which our more highly developed civilisation has shown us to be necessary for the well-being and proper government of society.

By section 33 of the charter the existence of the company as an administrative and governing body was limited to twenty-five years from the date of signature. At the end of this period the Crown has the right to renew it for a further period of ten years,

or to withdraw the charter, as seems to it best. If, however, the Imperial Government decides to take over the administration of the country, reasonable compensation is to be paid to the shareholders in the British South Africa Company.

By another clause, section 20, nothing in the nature of a monopoly of trade is to be permitted within the territories covered by the charter. At the time of the Parliamentary Committee's inquiry into the administration of Rhodesia, as will be explained at a later stage, it was alleged that this clause had been violated.

Long before the charter was obtained—in the early part of 1891, in fact—Mr Rhodes, with characteristic restlessness and impatience, had returned to South Africa. He had set things in train in London for the successful carrying through of the charter and the floating of the British South Africa Company, and considered himself free to return to his multifarious duties at Cape Town.

One of the things most urgently demanding his attention at this time was the best means of bringing about the effective occupation of the Matabele country. During his stay in London he had had more than one conversation on this subject with Mr F. C. Selous, the famous hunter and explorer, who had a very extensive knowledge of Lobengula's country. Mr Selous was of the opinion that the eastern portion of the country—that region now known as Mashonaland—should be the first to be colonised, and adduced several weighty arguments in favour of this. Among these was the fact that the land in this portion of the country was much higher than farther westward, and that the climate better suited Europeans, while

the soil was more fertile and water more plentiful. In addition, by keeping well to the east, there would be less chance of a collision with Lobengula's impis of young warriors. Rhodes saw the force of these reasons, and decided that the eastern portion of the country should be colonised first.

Another important consideration in favour of this was, that by first occupying Mashonaland connection with the East Coast by a line of railway could be made at less cost than if the white men settled farther westward. At this time the idea of a railway from Cape Town and Kimberley to pass through Bechuanaland and onwards to the Zambesi had not occurred to Rhodes; or, if it had, he had set it aside as impracticable in the immediate future. At this time his scheme with regard to the railway system of South Africa was that the main line from Cape Town to the north should pass through the two Boer republics; and in all probability, had it not been for the obstructive tactics of President Kruger, the Kimberley-Bulawayo railway would not have been built for some years to come, perhaps never, and the line through the Orange Free State and the Transvaal would have formed the first portion of the trans-continental railway of which Rhodes was already thinking.

He was convinced that the best way to open up a country to white colonisation was by means of railways and telegraphs, and, as the future of this Rhodesian territory depended so largely on the quick development of its mineral wealth, he foresaw that he must at the earliest possible moment build a railway from some point or other on the East Coast, in Portuguese territory, into the heart of Mashonaland.

Rhodes, however, had other things to think of at this time besides this railway. As a preliminary to this larger scheme he had decided to erect a telegraph-wire from Cape Town to the twin states of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, so that the settlers here should not be cut off absolutely from all contact with civilisation. In addition to settling these things in connection with his northern expansion plans, Rhodes found himself called to other duties. The Government of Cape Colony, headed by Sir Gordon Sprigg, suddenly resigned, and it was some little time before a new Cabinet could be formed. At length the High Commissioner sent for Rhodes as the only man enjoying the confidence of both the British and the Dutch sections of the population, and intrusted him with the task of forming a ministry. It was a commission which Rhodes hesitated to accept. He considered that he had quite enough on his hands in the development of the territories about to be placed under the control of his company, without undertaking any fresh responsibilities; and, moreover, he was not sure what following he could command if he did consent to form a Cabinet.

At the same time the position of Premier at the Cape was not altogether displeasing to him, and in order to see what support he would receive if he accepted the office, he asked the leaders of the Bond to meet him to discuss the matter. They did so, and in the end promised to support him on certain conditions. Some little time previously to this, Mr Hofmeyr had visited Rhodes and offered him the Premiership of the Colony if he would accept it as the nominee of the Bond, for this office, it should be pointed out, was practically in the gift of the

Bond at this time, and no one could hope to form a government if opposed by the Afrikander party. Mr Rhodes curtly refused Hofmeyr's offer. At every stage of his career he has been perfectly willing to work with the Bond for the closer union of the two races, but he has never been prepared to act as the tool of the Afrikander caucus.

In the end he formed his ministry and took up the reins of office, thus becoming the Prime Minister of an important portion of the British Empire at the early age of thirty-seven. He assumed office with the firm intention of welding together into one solid whole the two races, if it was in the bounds of human ability to do it. Let us repeat, to bring the Dutch and British sections of the South African population into close union has been one of Rhodes' greatest ambitions; and that he has not been able to do this has not been his fault, although it must be admitted that the foolish and wicked Jameson Raid did a great deal to prevent the extinction of race hatred in South Africa, and, moreover, gave those who saw with dismay Rhodes' great popularity among the Dutch of Cape Colony a splendid opportunity to incite this section of the community against him.

At this time, 1890, Rhodes was, without doubt, one of the hardest worked men whom it would be possible to find. He was the managing director of the newly established Chartered Company, and as such had virtually the whole responsibility of the colonisation and development of the Matabele country on his shoulders. Added to this now were the duties and anxieties attendant on the Premiership of Cape Colony. Only a man of his restless and untiring disposition, and ability to concentrate the whole of his mental and

physical faculties on any one object to the exclusion of all the rest, until such time as it was carried through to a definite conclusion, could have hoped to combine the two positions with anything like thoroughness.

The dual position of Rhodes proved in some ways a drawback to him: that was inevitable. Both the dwellers in Cape Colony and the settlers in Rhodesia feared that he was neglecting their particular interests in favour of the others. Colonists in Rhodesia, indeed, openly asserted that Rhodes thought more of the prosperity of the Cape than he did of the development of the new country; while the people of the Cape thought and said exactly the reverse—that they were being neglected and sacrificed for the benefit of the new colony in the north. As a matter of fact, Rhodes was doing all in his power to promote the best interests of both; but probably it would have been better had not the two offices of Prime Minister of Cape Colony and managing director of the British South Africa Company been combined in one man, even though that man had the great capabilities which Mr Rhodes has displayed.

Amid his many duties Rhodes managed to find time to endeavour to push his scheme for a united South Africa under the British flag a little further. This he hoped to bring about by degrees: he saw that it was not a thing that could be accomplished in an hour. Successive steps in the development of this policy were to be a railway union, a customs union, and a united policy for the government of the native races. The unceasing opposition of the Government of the Transvaal, however, was against Rhodes' efforts, though he did not despair of his ultimate success, especially as affairs in the Transvaal seemed to be

shaping themselves into a more favourable attitude for the reception of these schemes. The continued prosperity of the gold mines around Johannesburg had the effect of attracting thousands of Europeans to the spot, and of these the majority were of British descent. So great was this immigration to the Witwatersrand that it seemed as though in a year or two the original Burgher population of the Transvaal would be swamped, and that the aliens in the country would, by sheer weight of numbers, gradually bring about a form of government more in keeping with modern principles than the retrograde and antiquated *régime* of Kruger and his supporters.

Possibly, had it not been for the Jameson Raid, this is what would have happened. The unification of South Africa, it may be, would have been achieved by peaceable and natural means. The chances, however, are that it would not. Later events have shown very plainly that President Kruger was not disposed to yield one jot or tittle of his autocratic rights without a prolonged and bloody struggle. Be this as it may, in 1890 Rhodes firmly believed that the confederation of the states of South Africa could be arrived at in a peaceable manner.

It was towards the end of 1889 that steps were taken for sending up the first batch of colonists to the new colony. Rhodes had remained undecided for some time as to how this could best be done, and in the end he accepted the offer of Mr (or Major) Frank Johnson to raise a small body of pioneers in England and Cape Colony to settle in Mashonaland. In return for this, Major Johnson was to receive the sum of £90,000 in cash, and liberal grants of farms and mining rights in the new country were to be made to the pioneers.

Details having been settled, early in 1890 this pioneer force, numbering about 180 men, assembled at Kimberley, preparatory to commencing its march into the interior.

It is rather curious that the town which had seen Mr Rhodes rise from an unknown miner to a position of great power and influence should have been the spot where the corps assembled that was to aid in so large a measure in bringing about the development of the great schemes which he had some years before conceived within it. Major Johnson was in chief command of the Pioneer Corps until it reached the Shashi river, the boundary-line which divides Mashonaland from Bechuanaland. This place was arrived at on July 1, 1890, and a halt was called until the little force could be joined by three troops of the newly raised British South Africa Company's Police, under the command of Sir John Willoughby. These served to bring up the total strength of the column to nearly 500 men. Lieutenant-Colonel Pennefather of the Imperial army now took over the supreme command of the force, and Mr F. C. Selous accompanied it as chief of the intelligence department, a position for which he was particularly well qualified.

A fort was built at Tuli, and a small garrison of police left in charge, and then the column set off on its journey of some 400 miles across a virtually unknown country to Mount Hampden, in Mashonaland, which had been definitely pitched upon as the destination of the pioneers.

The attitude of Lobengula had changed since the days when he granted the concession to the three envoys of Mr Rhodes. He sent several messages to the pioneer force telling them to turn back to their

own country, or else to proceed to their destination *via* Gu-Buluwayo, so that he might see them and learn their intentions from their own lips. Several of his impis of young soldiers, too, gathered in the line of march of the column as though bent on opposing its farther progress, and it needed all Rhodes' tact and diplomacy, and a great deal of watchfulness and forbearance on the part of those in charge of the pioneer column, to avoid a collision with the Matabele. The spot selected for the erection of the last fort, Fort Salisbury as it was named, was reached on September 10, 1890, without any fighting, although on more than one occasion it had seemed as though a collision was inevitable. On the following day the British flag was hoisted and the country formally taken under the protection of Great Britain. In this manner a new colony was called into existence.

Thus Mr Rhodes' dream of a British Empire stretching towards the heart of Africa from the Cape of Good Hope was realised, and soon there were many parties of adventurers making their way through Bechuanaland and the Transvaal to the north, to enter the new country, while towns round the police forts of Salisbury, Victoria, and Charter sprang up in a manner that recalled the "mushroom cities" of Western America.

It was about this time that Rhodes began to come into really prominent public notice in England, and many and diverse were the opinions concerning him. Probably more controversy and argument has raged round his character than round that of any other public man, save, possibly, Mr Chamberlain. By some he was regarded as nothing more than an ambitious financier of considerable ability and original ideas,

inclined to be utterly unscrupulous in his methods ; while others regarded him as a heaven-sent statesman, who was destined by Providence to place the British Empire on a pinnacle of glory and prosperity higher than had ever before been known. As a matter of fact, both these views are exaggerated. To call Rhodes unscrupulous is hardly fair, yet it is undeniable that he is firmly convinced that the attainment of a praiseworthy end justifies the employment of almost any means. On the other hand, to assert that he is a statesman of unique ability, and one destined to play the part of a nineteenth- or twentieth-century Oliver Cromwell in the aggrandisement of Great Britain, is, to say the least, exaggerated praise.

Rhodes has always believed in the ultimate triumph of the British race, and has recognised the necessity for expanding the British Empire. Moreover, he has regarded himself as one who was to take a prominent share in bringing these things about ; and while his aims have been lofty enough, they have always been leavened with a dash of common-sense. He believes in the development and expansion of the British Empire, but he believes also in obtaining a tangible return for those who risk their money in order to benefit the Empire. As he once remarked, "Pure philanthropy is all very well in its way, but philanthropy plus 5 per cent is a good deal better." He is not a self-seeker or one who pants for the praise of the multitude, and he would never, for the sake of gaining popular applause, adopt a line of conduct that his better judgment told him was wrong. On the other hand, he is not by any means of a retiring disposition, nor a man likely to hide his light under a bushel.

Unconsciously, maybe, he is an egoist, and when we look round and see the changes he has wrought in South African polities, and the vast regions he has added to the dominions of the British Crown, we cannot be surprised. Of recent years especially Rhodes has been rather disposed to emphasise those peculiar traits in his character which have excited most public comment, so that what were originally the merely rugged edges of his powerful mind have now been cultivated into mannerisms.

As has been said, Rhodes is a bundle of inconsistencies, and the more one tries to analyse his character the more baffled one becomes. It is for all the world like walking through a maze. We start off with the conviction that we know all about it, that we have got the key to the mystery safe in our memory, and that the whole affair is absurdly simple. After advancing a little way, however, we find ourselves quite bewildered, and compelled to wander about in an aimless manner like a ship without a rudder, trusting to good fortune to show us the way out, and all the knowledge that we started with is driven completely out of our minds by the twistings and windings that confront us whichever way we turn.

To proceed with our narrative. As soon as the pioneer force was disbanded, things in the new territory of Mashonaland settled down quickly, and the settlers spread over the country in all directions seeking for payable gold-reefs. All seemed *couleur de rose*. The fact is, things were progressing too rapidly. The approaching wet season was to bring havoc and ruin in its train. Malaria cast its baleful wings over the country, while rinderpest and the deadly tsetse fly

combined to kill off the cattle, trek-oxen, and horses of the settlers in large numbers. Further, with the rivers in flood and the climate so deadly both for horses and cattle, supplies of food-stuffs from the south began to run short, and the unfortunate settlers were threatened with famine added to their other hardships. It was the reverse of the medal, and things seemed to be growing gloomier each day. Many persons both at home and in South Africa lost all faith in the country, and Rhodes came in for more than his share of the blame for the terrible state of things which prevailed. Among many of those who had gone up to Mashonaland themselves, or had relatives there, there was a disposition to "round" on Rhodes as soon as the hard times came, and to say that he should have prevented such a state of things, or at any rate foreseen it. This was ridiculous, of course. Even when things were at their blackest, however, and he was being attacked and abused on all sides, Rhodes never lost heart, and he devoted himself with great energy and determination to remedying the state of things which prevailed, and to taking precautions to prevent similar disasters in the future.

In order to learn more fully the real truth, Mr Rhodes sent Dr Rutherford Harris, at that time the secretary of the British South Africa Company in South Africa, to Salisbury to examine and advise as to what was best to be done. It had been Rhodes' intention to go north himself, but he found it impossible to leave Cape Colony at this juncture. In the summer of 1891, therefore, Dr Harris visited Salisbury, and set about doing all that lay in the power of the Chartered Company to improve the condition of the settlers in Mashonaland.

It was a little before this time that an expedition under Mr A. R. Colquhoun was sent eastwards from Salisbury to the small independent kingdom of Manicaland, situate between Mashonaland and Portuguese territory, to obtain if possible a concession to work the minerals from Umtassa, the king of the territory. It was in this region that the forces of the British South Africa Company and the Portuguese came into collision, and for some months a state of great tension was created between the two countries. It was only when Lord Salisbury threatened the Government at Lisbon with an ultimatum that the Portuguese withdrew their claims to Manicaland, which they acknowledged to be outside their sphere of influence. The settlement was not reached without two severe skirmishes between the troops of the contending parties in Manicaland, in both of which the Portuguese were defeated with heavy loss.

The Anglo-Portuguese treaty was signed in June 1891. By it the British South Africa Company was permitted to assume sovereign rights in Manicaland, and each Power pledged itself to respect the other's territory. An important clause in the agreement was that which provided for the construction of a line of railway from the Portuguese port of Beira, on the East Coast, at the mouth of the Pungwe river, to Manicaland and Salisbury. The capital for the building of this line was to be provided jointly by the Chartered Company and the Mozambique Company, which had the control of the town and port of Beira under a concession from the Portuguese Government.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GREAT DUEL : RHODES *v.* KRUGER.

CECIL RHODES and ex-President Kruger may be taken as typifying respectively the two divisions of the white population of South Africa, and the two great influences which have been at work in that region for the last generation. Rhodes fittingly represents the progressive aims and ambitions of the go-ahead British colonists, who have desired the unification and better government of South Africa, which, they foresaw, could only be brought about by the undisputed supremacy of the British flag. Kruger as fittingly stands for the old Boer *voortrekkers*, with their inveterate dislike and impatience of control by their fellow-men, and even of contact with them ; with whom absolute freedom of action and the entire absence of restraint had become a fetish, so that rather than submit to even the nominal control of Great Britain, they had years ago quitted Cape Colony and plunged into the unknown lands to the north, and there waged many bloody wars with the fierce native tribes before they were permitted to settle peacefully in the country that they coveted.

Freedom is the birthright of every man, and there is no stouter upholder of this doctrine than Cecil

Rhodes ; but it must be freedom of a rational nature. That the whole population of South Africa—British, Dutch, and natives alike—should have as much personal liberty of action as could with safety be given them has always been Rhodes' contention, and no one can be more impatient of Government control than he has shown himself. But he has sufficient sense to know that freedom carried to extreme limits becomes anarchy pure and simple, and that solidity and uniformity of government must exist, else chaos will ensue.

The Boers have always resented control, even by their own Raads. Tax-paying in any shape or form has ever been detested by them, and avoided by any and every means in their power. It was in vain for Kruger and the other members of the executive Government of the Transvaal to point out how necessary, and indeed imperative, it was for the Boer farmers to bear their share of the cost of administering and maintaining the state. The farmer looked around him over his land : there was no other homestead or sign of human existence to be descried so far as the eye could see, and he relied on his rifle to repel any assault by the natives on his property or his life. Why, then, he argued, should he be taxed to support and maintain a Government in far-away Pretoria, which, so far as he could see, was not of the slightest service to him, and without which he could get along very well ? Military service on the commando system the Boers accepted as the only means by which outside attacks on their homes and liberties could be repelled. Utterly ignorant as the typical veldt Boers are, and stubborn with a stubbornness which exceeds that of a Mexican mule, they would only see the matter in their

own light. It was vain to try to argue them out of their position.

Kruger was shrewd enough to see that the only result of his efforts to induce the Burghers of the Transvaal to submit to taxation of even the mildest form would be to decrease his popularity among his people. This, naturally, he was anxious to avoid. At the same time, when he assumed the Presidency the Transvaal was virtually bankrupt, and he was at his wits' end as to the means by which the Treasury was to be replenished. It was then, most fortunately and opportunely for him, that the rich gold deposits on the Witwatersrand were discovered. Here was the solution of all the difficulties that had so long oppressed the Transvaal executive! Here was the milch cow which was not only to provide ample funds for the government of the state, without the Burghers having to bear any part of the burden, but provide as well handsome surpluses annually, which could be hoarded up for the furtherance of that scheme of Dutch predominance in South Africa which was fast becoming the ambition of Kruger and the Hollander clique that had assumed the entire control of the Transvaal.

At this point we must consider at some length the position of the Transvaal, and the motives by which its President and Government were actuated. This is necessary if we are to arrive at a full knowledge of the causes that brought about the long-drawn-out struggle between Kruger and Rhodes, which was only to terminate with the withdrawal of the former from South Africa.

I have thought it better to bring together the various incidents of the duel between these two re-

markable men into connected form in this and the following chapter, rather than to adhere to their strict chronological order. It will be necessary, of course, to refer to some matters—the Jameson Raid, for instance—in greater detail at subsequent stages; but my present object is to show at a glance the whole history of the conflict between the two high-priests of the rival British and Dutch causes in South Africa.

As has been seen, the first occasion on which the two came into collision was over the question of the pseudo-Boer republics that had been set up in Bechuanaland. Here the victory was with Rhodes. By skilful diplomacy he had won over the Boers of Stellaland under Van Niekerk to his side; and for the rest, there was the British column under Sir Charles Warren behind him to enforce British rights at the point of the bayonet if necessary. Kruger had perforce to withdraw his demands and to assume that cloak of submissive humility which he knows so well how to wear.

Baffled and defeated in his efforts to shut off Cape Colony from free access to the interior, the Transvaal President, retiring from the conflict with the best grace possible, was filled, it may be presumed, with a new-born respect for the powers of the young Englishman who had checkmated him. Beaten at one point, however, he at once concentrated his energies in another direction. Gifted by nature with a power of analysing and divining the minds of his fellow-men which was little short of wonderful, he could gauge correctly, as after-events have demonstrated, the impulses and desires which have from time to time swayed the British Government both at Cape Town and in Downing Street. But Cecil

Rhodes was an enigma to him. Kruger quickly recognised his ability, however, and after their conference at Fourteen Streams said with a sigh to those around them: "That young man will cause me trouble if he does not leave politics alone and turn to something else. Well, the racehorse is swifter than the ox, but the ox can draw the greater loads. We shall see." This, read in the light of after-events, was a remarkable prophecy, and the simile by which the old Dopper President compared himself to a patient, dogged ox and Rhodes to a swift and impetuous racehorse was as apt as most of his figures of speech are.

If Kruger had been quick to recognise Rhodes' powers, Rhodes, on his part, had not been wanting in penetration. In Kruger he saw the concentrated essence of Boer obstinacy and conservatism, and was assured that he would have to combat him by every means in his power if he was to carry through those schemes of expansion and federation which he had mapped out.

The next occasion on which Rhodes and Kruger found themselves opposed was over the vexed question of railways through the Transvaal. Rhodes has rightly dubbed the railway and the electric telegraph the "pioneers of civilisation," and as such he has always stoutly advocated their extension throughout South Africa. As usual Kruger supplied the antithesis to Rhodes' ideal. To the ex-President of the Transvaal, railways have always been abhorrent. For many years he set his face sternly against their introduction into his state. In vain Rhodes exercised his powers of persuasion and argument on the adamantine old Burgher. The latter regarded the introduction of

railways into his country with feelings of the deepest aversion; and it is doubtful whether, had it not been for the discovery of the Rand goldfields, he would have ever assented to the building of railway tracks in the Transvaal. Yet he himself had foreseen that some day it might be necessary for him to yield on this point, and he debated within himself as to how he was to permit the construction of railways, when the time came that their advent could no longer be resisted, so as to offer the least possible benefit to British colonists in Cape Colony and Natal. For with Kruger, even in these days, hatred of the British was the keynote of his character and policy, as one could not be in his company for long without discovering.

He perceived that if, as Rhodes urged him, he assented to the construction of the line through his country from the south to the north, the greater part of the receipts would fall into the hands of the British controlling power, that is, the Cape Government. This he was determined should not be. Rather than let British colonists have the benefit of profits earned by a railway which partly ran through his territory—for Kruger by this time regarded the Transvaal as being as much his own particular birthright as though he had been a hereditary monarch instead of the elected head of a professedly republican state—he would never permit a railway sleeper to be laid in the Transvaal.

It was the discovery of the Witwatersrand goldfield that led to his giving a reluctant consent to the construction of a railway to Pretoria. Many years before this time, in 1873, a treaty had been concluded between the South African Republic and Portugal dealing with various matters of concern to the two con-

tracting parties, and one of the clauses of this document provided for the construction at some undefined time in the future of a railway line from Delagoa Bay to the Transvaal capital. Moreover, by the terms of the award, which gave the control of Delagoa Bay to Portugal, it was expressly stipulated that the Transvaal was to be permitted to have free and unfettered access to the sea at this point.

For some years this question of a railway between Lorenço Marques and Pretoria was allowed to rest, but in 1887 a concession was granted to Colonel McMurdo, an American engineer, to build a railway line between Delagoa Bay and Komati Poort, on the Transvaal frontier.

As this section of the railway approached the Transvaal, emissaries of Colonel McMurdo visited Pretoria in the hope of getting Kruger to agree to a concession being granted them to continue the line onward to Pretoria. This was refused by the President, who, however, showed himself to be much more pliable in his attitude towards the introduction of railways into the country than had hitherto been the case. In the end, after some amount of discussion and negotiation, he granted a concession to continue the railway from Komati Poort onwards to the Netherlands South African Railway Company, a corporation to which he had, in return for a very substantial personal subsidy, granted a monopoly of all the railways to be constructed in the Transvaal at any time in the future.

This favourable attitude of Kruger induced Rhodes to make another effort to extend the Cape railway system northwards through the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Rhodes was in a fair way for

obtaining the extension of the line through Free State territory, the Government of which was greatly more enlightened and progressive than the oligarchy at Pretoria ; and, despite Kruger's intrigues to prevent this railway extension into the sister republic, the Free State Government in 1889 definitely agreed to accept Rhodes' terms, and a railway convention was forthwith signed by the Cape Colony and the Orange Free State. By this document the Cape Government was to extend its main line over the Orange river, through Bloemfontein, and then northwards towards the boundary of the South African Republic. In return, the Orange Free State was to get its main line of railway built at the expense of the Cape Government, and was to receive half the net profits of the working of the line. In addition, the Free State Government had the power to purchase the section of the line running through its territory at the actual price of construction, at any time that it chose to do so.

Kruger was now compelled to capitulate. The population of the Rand had increased enormously, and the danger of a famine in the country through food-supplies not being brought up quickly enough by ox-waggons was very real. The more progressive members of the Raad placed the case for the introduction of railways into the country so forcibly before Kruger, that he saw that unless he acceded to their demands his position as President would be seriously threatened. He withdrew his opposition, therefore, though, it must be confessed, with a very ill grace.

At the beginning of 1890 the line from Delagoa Bay entered Transvaal territory, and its progress towards Pretoria, though sure, was very slow, for the Transvaal

capital was not reached until five years later. Kruger had hoped that this line would satisfy the demands of the mining community, but here he was mistaken. It was not enough that they should be in quick communication with the sea at Delagoa Bay ; they wished, in addition, the accomplishment of Rhodes' scheme for a railway to unite Cape Town, the natural centre of the trade of South Africa, with Johannesburg. They accepted the Delagoa Bay-Pretoria line as a promise of the coming railway development of the country, but they were not prepared to accept this line as a full discharge of the Government's liabilities in this direction. It was as though the British Government had built a railway line to connect Manchester with the sea at Liverpool, and yet refused permission for another line from Manchester to London. In the end, Kruger yielded to the force that was brought against him ; and soon after he had consented to the line from Komati Poort being continued, he gave the necessary permission for this extension of the Cape railway system into the Transvaal, on the understanding that the Netherlands Railway Company was to control the Transvaal section of the line when built.

Rhodes had long foreseen that a line of railway from Cape Town northwards to the goldfields of the Rand was imperative, and indeed inevitable, and he was fortunate enough to receive not only the support of the Cape Parliament, but that of the Orange Free State Government and the vast majority of the Uitlander population of the Transvaal, and of the Progressive Boers as well. Kruger was compelled to yield to the overwhelming pressure that was brought to bear against him. In 1891 the railway line crossed the Vaal river near Viljoen's Drift, and was carried for-

ward so quickly that in September of the following year it had reached Johannesburg, beating its rival from the east coast by nearly three years.

Thus it came about that Mr Rhodes, after many years of negotiation and persuasion, managed to carry out the first part of his scheme for the closer union of the various states of South Africa by means of a common railway interest. The first portion of the struggle over the railway question between Rhodes and Kruger may be said to have come to an end with the arrival of the line at Johannesburg. Mr Rhodes had had distinctly the best of the contest.

The second act of this railway war between the two most prominent men in South Africa was still to come, and was opened by President Kruger as soon as the Delagoa Bay line reached Pretoria. It had always been the pet argument of Kruger and his supporters that, so soon as this latter line was open, there would be no scope for the other railway to Cape Town, as all traffic to and from the goldfields would, as a matter of course, pass over the east-coast route, owing to the much shorter distance it would have to traverse. Rhodes, however, knew that this argument, seemingly faultless in theory, would not be upheld by the actual facts. He believed, and subsequent events proved him to be correct, that owing to his railway from Cape Town to Johannesburg being so much better managed, and working, as he was convinced it would, so much more smoothly and regularly than the Delagoa Bay line with its dual control of Boers and Portuguese, it would attract by far the greater proportion of the goldfields traffic, which was the most important stake that the railways in Africa could play for.

The fact, too, that Cape Town was the natural

entrepot for South Africa was a great point in his favour, as was the other that, as his line had been in existence nearly three years before its rival, when the east-coast line was passing through those difficulties which are inseparable from a newly established railway, the traffic to the south was being conducted with precision and expedition. It came about, therefore, that the traffic which went over the Delagoa Bay line was infinitesimal compared with that which flowed southwards.

This state of things was not at all to the liking of President Kruger, who, in his hatred of everything British, was dismayed to see practically the whole of the traffic of the Transvaal passing through British territory to and from the coast. Consequently he arrayed his forces for another tilt with the British railway pioneers of South Africa headed by Mr Rhodes.

Exercising, as President Kruger did, a considerable influence in the councils of the Netherlands South African Railway Company, he soon was able to organise his plan of campaign. The forty miles of railway between the Rand and Viljoen's Drift on the Vaal belonged, as has already been explained, to the Netherlands Company, which was, of course, able to charge whatever rates it chose for the conveyance of goods and passengers over this section of the railway. With the object of compelling merchants to send and obtain their goods *via* Delagoa Bay, the Netherlands Company gradually raised its rates for the Cape section under its control, until at last it cost more to send goods this forty miles than it did to send them the whole distance from the Rand to Lorengu Marques. Further than this, by artfully keeping

the line blocked with strings of empty trucks at Viljoen's Drift, the company was able to occasion much delay and inconvenience to the commercial community of Johannesburg,—a delay which, of course, was carefully avoided on the east-coast route.

This raising of the rates in a great measure had its desired effect. The merchants could not afford to send their goods *via* Cape Town, owing to the prohibitive charges, while the delays at Viljoen's Drift gradually became greater and greater. Rhodes therefore was faced with a serious problem, and for a time it seemed as though Kruger had completely triumphed over his rival. Rhodes, however, though he was repulsed for a time, was by no means defeated. He had not the slightest idea of withdrawing from the contest, though it must be admitted that he had not foreseen this possible move on the part of Mr Kruger and the Netherlands Railway Company.

His first effort was to reduce the rates over the Cape Colony and Orange Free State sections of the line so as to counteract the additional sums charged on the Transvaal section. This, however, he could only do to a certain point; and when he had cut down rates to the lowest limits at which the line could be supported and pay a small profit, he found that the charges were still considerably higher than the merchants in the Transvaal could afford to pay. The Netherlands Company, on their part, had only to keep raising their rates as he lowered them on the other portions of the line to maintain the balance. The result of all this was, of course, to divert more and more of the Johannesburg traffic to the Delagoa Bay line.

It was necessary now for Mr Rhodes and those

working with him to adopt other methods, and he was able to induce the Governments of Cape Colony and the Orange Free State to lodge strong protests at Pretoria against the excessive rates charged by the Netherlands Company, and the irritating and deliberate delays at Viljoen's Drift. Needless to say, these protests were quietly ignored by President Kruger. The Netherlands Company proceeded on its way without the least restraint from Pretoria.

Seeing that these protests had no effect, Rhodes quickly formulated a scheme for the outwitting of the Netherlands Company and the master-hand behind it ; and having the support of practically the whole of the merchants of Johannesburg in his efforts to obtain cheaper transport rates between that town and Cape Town, he was able to put it into immediate execution. Moreover, he found a very willing ally in the Government of the Orange Free State, who naturally were incensed at the policy of the Transvaal, which threatened ruin to their section of the line just as much as it did to that portion which ran through British territory.

This scheme of Mr Rhodes was to set up a fast and regular service of ox-waggons between Johannesburg and the Free State bank of the Vaal at Viljoen's Drift. By this method goods would be conveyed to and from the railway much cheaper and quicker than could be done by the railway company with its prohibitive rates and vexatious delays. This was done, and as a result the trade of the Rand, which had been diverted to the east-coast line, now returned to the Cape line.

The laugh was now on the other side, for the

Netherlands Company was completely ignored and outwitted, and not only did the merchants withdraw their trade from the Delagoa Bay line, but, entering into the struggle with heart and soul, and feeling that they were being treated with great harshness by the Netherlands Company, they did it with more thoroughness than they would otherwise have displayed. In addition, the railway company did not receive a penny from the increasing traffic to the south owing to this service of ox-waggons, which conveyed the goods to a point on the railway beyond their control. Rhodes had turned the tables on his rival with a vengeance, and the Transvaal President was furious when he saw how neatly he had been outmanœuvred. Having very unwisely lost his temper, Kruger was now provoked to a step which his cooler judgment would have told him was bound to recoil upon his own head. This was the famous "closing of the drifts" in 1895, which so nearly brought about a war between Great Britain and the Transvaal. By this step the Transvaal President forbade all goods from the south passing over the fords of the Vaal river, so that no imports could reach the Transvaal save by the railway. In doing this the President clearly overreached himself. As soon as this edict was published there was an immediate outcry against this flagrant violation of the London Convention, by the Cape Government, which was supported in its action by the Orange Free State Government. Kruger, indeed, found that he had brought a hornet's nest about his ears, for the Dutch and British inhabitants of Cape Colony, the Boers of the Free State, and the colonists of Natal all banded themselves together in a protest against this outrageous action on the part of the Transvaal Government,

which stood completely isolated, confronting an alliance such as had never previously been known in South Africa.

British and Afrikander alike stood resolute in their determination to teach President Kruger and his satellites the much-needed lesson that they could not be permitted to carry their fanatical hatred of all things British to the extent of paralysing the whole of the trade of South Africa. Even within the boundaries of the Transvaal there was no solid support of Kruger in the position he had taken up. The Uitlander population, of course, were against the closing of the drifts to a man, and even among the Burghers there was an important section that saw with feelings of dismay that by his obstinate and retrogressive policy Kruger was threatening the country with a war from which it could not possibly hope to emerge save with crushing defeat if not absolute ruin.

Not content with these protests to Pretoria, which were, of course, passed over in silence, the intervention of the High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, was called for, and he at once placed the state of affairs before the Colonial Office, and asked for immediate instructions as to the course to be pursued in the event of Kruger persisting in his determination to keep the drifts closed. Mr Chamberlain had just become Colonial Secretary, and he promptly grappled with the problem in the energetic and businesslike method for which he is noted. His reply to the High Commissioner was terse and strictly to the point. "The action of the Transvaal Government," he said, "in thus closing the drifts to traffic is indubitably a breach of the 'most favoured nation' clause and the 'free admission' clause of the London Convention."

Further, he inquired whether, in the event of a war being provoked by this attitude of the Transvaal Government, the Cape Government would bear half the cost and grant the Imperial troops free transport through the colony. Mr Rhodes, who was the Premier of the Cape at this time, at once consulted his attorney-general, Mr W. P. Schreiner, one of the leading pillars of the Afrikander Bond, and having ascertained from him that the Dutch population of the Cape would assent to Mr Chamberlain's proposals in the event of war, cabled to the Colonial Secretary to say that his terms would be accepted without hesitation by the Cape.

Mr Chamberlain thereupon wasted no further time in fruitless negotiation with Kruger, but politely, though none the less firmly, informed him that the continued closure of the drifts on the Vaal river after the 15th November 1895 would be taken by Great Britain as an act of war.

This direct method of dealing on the part of the Colonial Office came as a complete surprise to Mr Kruger, who had hitherto been accustomed to shilly-shallying and hesitation on the part of Downing Street. He was taken completely aback by this demonstration of the "new diplomacy." He saw perfectly well that he could not hope to fight the combined forces which were arrayed against him, and therefore withdrew from his untenable position, and permitted the drifts to be once more thrown open to traffic. The incident then came to an end.

Mr Rhodes had therefore secured the entire victory over the railway question, and one cannot be surprised that, after the many times Kruger has been humiliated and thwarted by the young British states-

man, a feeling of hatred of Rhodes found a place in his heart.

In the following chapter it will be necessary to discuss the relations which have existed between Kruger and Cecil Rhodes since the drifts incident was disposed of by the issue of a British ultimatum.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT DUEL: RHODES *v.* KRUGER—*continued.*

THE efforts of the Transvaal Government to obtain a foothold across the Limpopo river in the dominions of Lobengula, and the manner in which these efforts were frustrated by Rhodes, have already been referred to. The incident, however, which brought the Transvaal Burghers and the semi-military forces of the British South African Company to the brink of a conflict on the banks of the Limpopo may be described in greater detail.

For long Rhodes had foreseen that a trek on a large scale by the Burghers of the Northern Transvaal into Matabeleland was contemplated. For many years previously it had been the cherished ambition of the South African Republic to establish a new state north of the Limpopo, where, as one of the spokesmen of this movement put it, "a genuine Afrikander nationality might be developed." The creation of the British South Africa Company had, of course, the immediate effect of preventing any trek on a scale large enough to receive the support of the Transvaal Government; so President Kruger and those with him set about finding another method of gaining a foothold in the fertile country of Matabeleland.

Long experience had shown Kruger that while it was worse than useless for him to defy Great Britain openly by the deliberate breaking of a treaty and by refusing to be longer bound by it, yet if he studiously ignored its existence and provisions, and set about gaining the object on which he had determined as though totally oblivious of his infringement of British rights, he generally got some portion of what he wanted. It is a delightfully simple method of procedure: to steal a loaf of bread belonging to your neighbour in the hope that he will permit you to retain one half of it on your handing him back the other half.

In the early part of 1891 it was openly announced in the Transvaal that a great trek of the Burghers of the Lydenburg district to the north of the Limpopo was about to take place, and that on June 1 of that year the new Boer republic of Banjaland would be formally called into existence. With this movement, of course, the Transvaal Government had, on the surface, nothing whatever to do; but underneath the whole affair was to be described the controlling influence of Kruger and Joubert. Immediately, protests against this forthcoming trek were lodged at Pretoria by Mr Rhodes in his capacity as managing director of the Chartered Company, and by the High Commissioner on behalf of the British Government, whose aid in the matter was invoked by the British South Africa Company. Following his accustomed policy, President Kruger absolutely ignored these protests, and as preparations for the incursion into the dominions of the Chartered Company went on with increasing vigour, the situation rapidly became grave.

Kruger relied, doubtless, on the complex machinery by which the British Empire is governed to give him the time he needed for the carrying out of his project. He knew that no arrival of troops on a really formidable scale could take place for at least several weeks, before which time the new republic would have been successfully set up, when, following his usual line of conduct, he would demand handsome compensation before consenting to withdraw his Burghers from a spot where they had not the least right to be.

Fortunately for the speedy defeat of these schemes, President Kruger had opposed to him a man whose contempt for red tape is carried at times to the extremest limits. While Sir Henry Loch, at that time the High Commissioner at the Cape, was communicating with the Colonial Office and awaiting the instructions of the Cabinet regarding this matter, Rhodes quickly moved down all the B. S. A. Co. police he could muster to the drifts on the Limpopo, where they were joined by hastily enrolled bodies of settlers, who, by the terms on which they were allowed to enter the country, were liable for military service in times of need.

Thus it came about that when the Boer trekkers reached the fords across the river, they found strong bodies of armed men awaiting their approach and wearing a decidedly menacing appearance. A halt of the trekkers was immediately called, and while a few of the younger and more impetuous Boers favoured the crossing of the drifts, by armed force if necessary, they were overruled, and communications were opened up with the leaders of the defending force, asking for the reason of the opposition to the trek. The

answer of Mr Rhodes' lieutenants was brief and pointed. No Boers, they explained, would be permitted to cross the river for the purpose of setting up a new republic on soil that had some time before passed under British control: the trekkers must either return to their former homes or, if they still desired to enter Matabeleland, must do so as British subjects under the control of the Chartered Company and on precisely the same terms as those accepted by the original settlers in Rhodesia. On these terms they would be welcome; on no others would they be permitted to cross the river.

Rhodes' policy in this respect was identical with that which he had pursued seven years before with the Boers of Stellaland. He was prepared to welcome the Boers in Rhodesia, and to grant them every right and privilege that was accorded to the British colonists: but they on their part must acknowledge the ultimate supremacy of Great Britain, and must cast off all thoughts of forming pseudo-republics that were to be incorporated with the Transvaal as soon as the time for doing so was ripe.

Thus the efforts of the Boers to extend the borders of the Transvaal northwards were frustrated by the energetic measures of Mr Rhodes; and President Kruger, with mixed feelings of anger and dismay, saw that the Transvaal was being slowly but surely encircled with a zone of British territory, and that all his efforts to prevent this were in vain. Whichever way the Transvaal President turned, he was confronted by the masterful figure of Cecil Rhodes, who made no secret of his purpose to confine the Transvaal to its original boundaries. Referring to this in a speech he made at Cape Town,

Rhodes said in the plainest and most unmistakable language that "there would be no more Boer republics permitted to be set up in South Africa." It was just about the time of this speech that Kruger began really to realise the calibre of the man whom he had opposed to him.

While from this time onward President Kruger imported into his constant disputes and contentions with Mr Rhodes considerable personal animosity, Rhodes on his part never retaliated by manifesting any personal dislike for the Transvaal President. Impatient with Kruger's hole-and-corner, retrogressive, and obstinate system of governing a valuable portion of South Africa Rhodes undoubtedly was, and in fact, with his ideas and ambitions of a nature so near akin and yet so diametrically opposed to those of President Kruger, it could scarcely be otherwise ; but he never showed the least unfriendly feeling towards Kruger the man as distinct from Kruger the politician. On the contrary, he was prepared at any time, both before the Raid and after, to extend the hand of friendship to the President of the Transvaal, and to work in amity with him for the welfare of both Dutch and British in South Africa. So far, however, from Kruger consenting to meet Rhodes half way in these advances for a better understanding between them, the old Dopper withdrew still farther into his shell, and refused to relent in even the slightest degree towards the man who had on so many occasions thwarted and outwitted him.

We now approach that most complex, and in some respects most momentous, chapter in Mr Rhodes' life, the Jameson Raid, its causes and its consequences ; and here the biographer of Mr Rhodes

feels himself to be stepping on delicate ground, inasmuch as, however he strives to be impartial in his deductions and correct in his statement of facts, he is bound to be assailed with a storm of criticism and abuse from one section or another of those who find themselves in opposition to him.

To arrive at the commencement of the events which led up to the invasion of the Transvaal by Dr Jameson's force, it is necessary to revert to the middle of the year 1895. The condition of the Uitlander population of Johannesburg had gradually been growing worse and worse. It was not quite so bad, perhaps, as some of the members of the Reform Committee have since tried to make us believe, but certainly the restrictions and burdens which were imposed upon that section of the community (which, after all, paid practically the whole of the taxes of the country, and had brought it from the verge of bankruptcy to the position of a rich and flourishing state) were galling in the extreme to men accustomed in their own countries to free and enlightened institutions. Even in such a minor question as the control of the Johannesburg waterworks the Uitlander population of that town, virtually the whole of the inhabitants, were not allowed a voice, and no one can be surprised that a movement was set on foot for obtaining concessions of better government from the executive at Pretoria. It was for this purpose that the since famous Reform Committee was founded.

It has often been said that the whole of this Reform movement was artificial, stimulated solely by the great capitalists of the Rand for their own ends. It is not the present writer's province in a book of this nature to argue for or against this view; but he

may at least point out that it was the capitalists who had the most to lose in the event of a collision with the authorities, and that therefore it would appear somewhat strange that they should have run the risks they did for the attainment of ends which would in all probability avail them little or not at all.

How Rhodes first came into sympathy with this movement is easy to explain. His interest in the gold mines of the Rand was very large, and when the Reform Committee was established he was naturally invited either to become a member or to appoint a representative. His name, moreover, was one to conjure with, not only in Johannesburg but throughout the whole of South Africa. When this invitation was sent to him he appointed his brother, Captain Ernest Rhodes, who was then in Johannesburg as his representative on the local directorate of the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa, Limited, to act on his behalf on the Reform Committee. At this time Rhodes, apart from the magic of his name, was regarded by those at the head of the Reform movement in Johannesburg as simply one of their number, no more and no less. He stood for the interest of the Consolidated Goldfields, just as Mr Lionel Phillips represented the Wernher-Beit interest and Mr George Farrar represented the interest of the family and firm of that name.

Captain Ernest Rhodes did not remain at Johannesburg very long after the formation of the Reform Committee, and when he quitted that town on his return to England another brother of Mr Rhodes, Colonel Francis William Rhodes, took his place in the offices of the Consolidated Goldfields and on the Reform Committee.



Portrait painted for me by Mr. G. H. V. Morris.

Gen. E. W. RHODES, D.S.O.

Colonel Frank Rhodes, to use the name by which he is more generally recognised, is perhaps the best-known member of the Rhodes family after Cecil. Educated as a soldier from his youth, he has at one time or another seen a considerable amount of active service in different parts of the world. On leaving Sandhurst he was gazetted to the 1st Royal Dragoons, and remained in the army for about twenty-three years in all. He was through the Soudan campaign, and accompanied the Nile expedition to Khartoum in the abortive effort to relieve General Gordon, and was present at the battles of El Teb and Tamai.

At the hot fight round the wells of Abu Klea Colonel Rhodes specially distinguished himself, and had several horses shot under him in the course of the engagement. He was many times mentioned in despatches, and was awarded several medals and clasps, while some years later the Distinguished Service Order was given him. At various times he has filled several staff appointments, accompanying Sir Gerald Portal to Uganda, and being one of the leading members of Lord Harris's *entourage* when that nobleman was Governor of Bombay. For a short period he was administrator of Mashonaland, where he was highly popular; and since the Raid he has acted as special correspondent for the 'Times' in Lord Kitchener's Soudan campaign, which culminated with the battle of Omdurman, where he was wounded. At the present time he is the managing director of the African Trans-Continental Telegraph Company. While in the army he was one of the most popular officers it would have been possible to find, and all who have ever met him have appreciated his kindly and genial temperament, for many of the rugged traits

which render his more famous brother rather unpopular in some circles are absent in him. He has on many occasions shown himself to be a highly capable military strategist and leader of men in the field, but it must be confessed that he does not shine as a politician or a diplomatist.

So soon, then, as Colonel Rhodes arrived at Johannesburg he became a member of the Reform Committee, and he devoted himself strenuously to obtaining a better and more liberal system of government for the Uitlander population of the Transvaal. It is necessary to set out here exactly what the aims of the Reform Committee were at the time it came into existence. The object of this body, which comprised representatives of every important interest and class in Johannesburg, was to bring about the better government of the state by strictly constitutional means. Nothing was further from the thoughts of those forming the Reform Committee than an appeal to armed force or any organised attempt to overthrow the existing Government of the South African Republic. All the committee desired and asked for—and it was not an unreasonable request, surely—was for fairer government, and for some voice, however small, in the spending of those vast sums of money which they were actually the means of providing. Unfortunately President Kruger and his advisers maintained a stiff-necked attitude towards the petitions and appeals of the Reform Committee, and refused to make even the least tangible concessions. “Yes,” President Kruger is reported to have said with a scornful ring in his voice as he tore up a petition signed by the population of Johannesburg, “you will get your ‘rights’—over my dead body!” Had the Transvaal President

made the least advance towards meeting the desires of the Reform Committee in 1895 it is certain that the Raid would never have taken place, and it is possible that the present devastating war would have been averted.

When it was seen, however, that Kruger was obdurate, and was steadfast in his determination to keep the Uitlanders from gaining the least scrap of political freedom, murmurs of discontent and anger in Johannesburg began to grow in volume, and it was at this time that an appeal to arms, if every other means failed, was first thought of. Rhodes had long been convinced that nothing in the way of real concessions would ever be wrung from the Transvaal Government by the Uitlanders, and the position that Kruger and his advisers took up showed that he was right. It was about this time, too, that the paths of the Reform Committee and Mr Rhodes began to diverge, and that the latter set about the development of a hastily sketched plan of campaign which ultimately terminated in the disastrous Raid. Arms and ammunition were, with Rhodes' active advice and assistance, smuggled into Johannesburg, while large reserves were stored in the De Beers mines at Kimberley; and those members of the Reform Committee who were at first disposed to question the necessity for these warlike preparations salved their consciences with the thought that

“Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow.”

It must in fairness be pointed out that Rhodes, who was the moving spirit in these preparations for an armed conflict if necessary, was not in the least

actuated by the motives of a common filibuster. All the spleen and anger with which his antagonists have assailed him has failed to show that he hoped or expected to reap the slightest personal gain from the revolution in Johannesburg. The whole weight of evidence points clearly in the other direction. He perceived, and indeed this fact was now obvious to all, that Kruger would not grant one jot or tittle of the demands, by no means outrageous, of the Uitlanders ; therefore, he reasoned, all that was left to them was an appeal to arms. It seemed to him that while they remained passive, Kruger would turn a deaf ear to the reasoning and petitions of the Reform Committee, but that the moment the whole white male population of the Rand flew to arms and suddenly menaced the capital, the Transvaal Government would prove amenable to reason, and substantial concessions would be forced from the executive. Especially did he think so, because Great Britain would be at once on the alert to know the true inwardness of this rising, and to see that her subjects were not punished in a manner disproportionate to their offences.

Such was the idea of Rhodes in November 1895, and his scheme for carrying out the plan of action he had formed met with the full approval of the Reform Committee, who, however, showed a very commendable desire to exhaust all peaceable methods of obtaining what they, rightly or wrongly, conceived to be justice before adopting the extreme step of an armed revolution.

There was another factor in the situation that Mr Rhodes and the Reform Committee had to consider before the question of an appeal to brute force

could be contemplated with any feeling of reasonable success: that was, the part which would be played by the only organised military force in the Transvaal—the Staats Artillerie. This tolerably well-trained and disciplined force, with its batteries of modern quickfiring weapons, would, it was obvious, be more than a match for the hastily armed and untrained levies of the Rand, who, of course, were without artillery. If Kruger, as was probable, turned his wrath on Johannesburg, the artillery would be able to reduce the town to a heap of ruins without any fear of reprisals.

What was wanted was another well-organised military or semi-military body, armed with field-guns of a calibre to keep the Staats Artillerie in check, which should step in between the raw volunteers from Johannesburg and the guns of the Transvaal Government. "Was there time," the Reform Committee asked themselves, "to organise such a body and to equip it with field-guns, and could such an undertaking be carried through without the President becoming aware of it?"—for, as after-events showed, Johannesburg was at that time, and indeed always has been, overrun with Government spies. The answer to this question was in the negative, and therefore a solution of the difficulty had to be found elsewhere.

The Reform Committee looked to Rhodes to find a satisfactory answer to this problem as to where the men and the guns were to come from to compel the Staats Artillerie to remain quiet, or successfully to oppose them if the necessity arose. In his dilemma Rhodes turned his eyes longingly to the B. S. A. Co. police in Rhodesia. Here was an immediate solution

to his difficulties. The men were a hard-bitten lot, inured to hardships, and all of them good riders and shots, and possessed of guns to enable them to attack the Staats Artillerie with confidence if the need for so doing arose. Rhodes, of course, saw that he was laying himself open to very serious consequences if his plan miscarried, but he had seen sufficient of the world to know that, whether he was infringing the laws of nations or not, if he was successful he would be applauded and upheld on all hands.

To tell the truth, Rhodes never seems to have realised fully the real gravity of his offence in leading an armed force into the territory of an independent, or rather a semi-independent, state. His idea, which he at once set about carrying into effect, was to move the police down to the little village of Pitsani on the Transvaal border, in the strip of Bechuanaland which had recently been transferred from the control of the Colonial Office to that of the Chartered Company, and to hold them there until it was clearly seen that the Staats Artillerie intended to assault Johannesburg, when they would have been at once moved over the border to prevent this. It is safe to say that Rhodes had only one idea in his mind at this time with regard to the movement of the forces he was placing on the Transvaal frontier, and that was to hold them there in readiness to advance to Johannesburg so soon as it was seen that the Boers were getting the upper hand, when the force would be able to restore order until such time as the High Commissioner could be summoned from Cape Town to arbitrate between the contending factions.

This was the real reason for Rhodes placing the

troops on the border; and while it must be admitted that, speaking from a strictly legal point of view, no state of things, however grave, could justify a private or semi-private individual organising an armed force to invade a friendly state, yet from Rhodes' point of view there was some justification for the step, especially as he believed that the "moral effect," as he phrased it, of this force would have a restraining influence on President Kruger, and would in all probability prevent him from taking that vengeance on the people of Johannesburg that he might otherwise be tempted to do when he found that he had that town, so to speak, under his heel.

Supposing things had gone as Rhodes had imagined they would, and the people of the Rand had taken up arms to enforce their demands for some share in the government of the state, few people either in South Africa or in Great Britain would have blamed Rhodes for employing the B. S. A. Co. police to protect non-combatants, and to restore order at Johannesburg until such time as the High Commissioner could reach that spot and discuss the matter with President Kruger. It was that, and nothing more than that, which was in the mind of Mr Rhodes at the time that he moved the police down to Pitsani.

The "flag incident," as it was called, was a small matter in itself; but it led to great results, inasmuch as it was the chief cause of the difference between Rhodes and the Reform Committee becoming so pronounced as it did, and ultimately led to the fiaseo of the Raid and the triumph of Kruger. The committee, not without reason it must be admitted, held that as the whole agitation was a purely internal one, and was intended to amend the government of the Trans-

vaal and not to replace it, the flag that the insurgents should fight under ought to be that of the South African Republic, especially as there were so many members of the movement who were not British subjects, and had no desire to become so. To this course Rhodes was strongly opposed, and it must be said at once that the attitude he adopted was absolutely indefensible. He held that the Uitlanders should at once hoist the union-jack and appeal for protection to Great Britain. The Committee maintained its position, and refused to assent to Rhodes' proposal ; and as neither side would give way, a deadlock ensued for some weeks, during which time news of the intended revolution filtered through to Pretoria and put Kruger and his advisers on their guard.

Meanwhile the men under Dr Jameson and Sir John Willoughby chafed increasingly at what seemed to them to be a purposeless delay, and it was then that Jameson with his officers embarked upon that wild scheme which it is safe to say astounded Cecil Rhodes just as much as it did the world at large. Jameson "took the bit between his teeth," to adopt Rhodes' picturesque phrase, and invaded the Transvaal without the least warning, with a result that is too well known to need recapitulation.

The immediate effect of the Raid was to place President Kruger in the right in the view of the whole world, and to condemn Rhodes as a criminal, and, what was much worse, as a bungler. By this time, however, the mists have cleared away a little, and it is possible to form a better judgment, and to see that while Kruger was not the injured martyr he so loudly proclaimed himself, Rhodes was not a feather-headed filibuster who set 500 men with eleven pieces

of comparatively light ordnance to seize a country which for two years has defied the whole armed strength of the British Empire.

It does not need much penetration to perceive that, had Rhodes contemplated an attack on the Transvaal Government and the conquest of the country, he would have organised a far larger force than he did, and that he would have carried out the whole of his preparations on a much vaster scale than actually was the case. The very fact that Dr Jameson's force was so small and so comparatively impotent should be sufficient to convince the impartial observer that, whatever may have been the idea that Cecil Rhodes had in his mind in placing this force on the boundary of the Transvaal, it certainly was not that of seizing the country by force of arms.

It was thus that the lengthy duel between Rhodes and Kruger culminated with all the honours going to the latter. After being defeated and baffled on every occasion on which they had come into collision, Kruger had, through one false move on the part of his opponent, snatched the final victory ; and while he was able to appear before the world as a somewhat pathetic figure whose country had been assailed and rights trampled underfoot by a jealous rival, Cecil Rhodes was, for a time at any rate, utterly discredited as one who not only had conspired against the peace of a small but friendly state, but had at the same time misled and deceived those who were nominally his allies.

This was undoubtedly the greatest opportunity of Kruger's whole career. He had the sympathies of practically the whole world with him ; for, at least until the publication of the ill-advised telegram of the German Emperor caused a revulsion, even in

England there was a considerable amount of feeling in his favour, and the only man who at all rivalled him in South Africa was, as it seemed, absolutely ruined.

A wiser and more gifted statesman than the ex-President of the South African Republic has proved himself would have grasped this opportunity with eagerness. By a reasonable and conciliatory attitude towards the Uitlanders in his country, and by strict justice, tinctured, however, with some show of mercy towards the Reform leaders, he could have totally abolished the whole of Rhodes' power at one blow, and stood out alone as the one prominent man in South Africa. Instead of this, he frittered away his opportunity, and by an overweening belief in his own powers involved his country in a terrible war, which brought about the necessity for his slinking away like a thief in the night, carrying with him millions of money to which he had not the slightest right, to end his days in exile with the painful knowledge that he had brought his country, his family, and himself to absolute misery and utter ruin. It is a pitiful picture of the deliberate flinging away of an otherwise great career for the want of the saving grace of a little common-sense.

As for Rhodes, while it seemed to all that his career as a public man in South Africa was completely at an end, he himself knew better. He retired for a time from public life, and contented himself with remaining in the background and moulding bullets for other, and less capable, men to shoot. The few months immediately succeeding the Jameson Raid were the darkest portion of his life, and that he ever emerged from it to build up a new reputation on the ashes of the

old is the strongest evidence that can be produced of his inherent power to sway the minds of his fellow-men.

At a subsequent stage in this biography it will be necessary to refer in greater detail to the course of events immediately preceding and succeeding the Jameson Raid.

CHAPTER XIII.

BEFORE THE MATABELE WAR.

IT was early in the year 1891 that Rhodes found himself able to pay his first visit to Mashonaland. Accompanying him was a small party of personal friends, including Dr Jameson. Dr Jameson, it had been decided, was to succeed Mr A. R. Colquhoun as the administrator of the country, while Mr Colquhoun was to proceed eastwards to negotiate with Umtassa, the chief of Manicaland, for a concession to work the minerals in his country with results that have already been related.

Hitherto Rhodes had been compelled to depend entirely on the reports of travellers and hunters for information regarding the real resources of the country which he had been the means of adding to the British Empire: now at last he was able to see the land for himself, and to gauge more accurately than had previously been possible the prospects of Mashonaland.

In the words of one who accompanied him, "Rhodes simply revelled in the tour," which he regarded in the light of a well-earned holiday. So soon as Mashonaland was entered, the whole weight of his responsibility as Premier of Cape Colony, the head of the gigantic diamond industry, and the managing director

of the British South Africa Company seemed to fall like a burden from his shoulders, and he became buoyant and as gay as a schoolboy during the vacation, as the little party moved northwards over the fertile plains of the rich Mashona country.

The objective of Mr Rhodes was Salisbury, where there were already several little points of difference between settlers around that town and the Chartered Company which called for his personal attention. He did not hurry forward to the capital, however, but made it his business to examine closely everything on the way that presented itself to his sight. He turned aside from his direct path to see the gold-reefs in the Hartley Hill district, where some years previously Lobengula had erected a small and primitive crushing-mill for the treatment of the ores.

Nothing, apparently, was too small or too trivial to call for Rhodes' attention. By long conversations with such settlers on the land as he met on his way to Salisbury he made himself personally acquainted with all their hopes and fears, and gained a great deal of information which proved of service to him later, when the rapid growth of the white population made it necessary for him to organise the government and administration of the country on a much larger and more complete scale than had at first been needed.

Rhodes has never lost that keen love of farming and out-of-door life generally which his early bringing-up in the heart of rural England had implanted in his nature. As he himself has told us—and those who know the man best will best realise how true it is—there was nothing in 1891 he would have liked better than to have cast behind him the whole of his wealth and political fame and power, and to have settled

down to cultivate a Rhodesian farm and spend the remainder of his life in placid calm, tending his cattle and sheep and sowing and garnering his crops in happy ignorance of all that was transpiring in the outside world. With longing eyes he would sit on his horse and watch in silence the hardy young settlers in Mashonaland bustling about their newly acquired farms, building houses and huts, or clearing and preparing the ground for the reception of the seed or the feeding of their flocks.

Then after a time Rhodes would turn away with a quick jerk of the reins and a tightening around the corners of his mouth, and his eyebrows would be contracted once more, and the customary cold gleam come into his eyes, as he thought of the many and great political aims that yet remained for him to accomplish before he could tell himself that his life-work was completed, and that he could thereafter live in ease and quietness far away from the toil and bustle of the world.

Besides profiting directly by thus coming into contact with the settlers in Mashonaland, Rhodes also reaped an indirect advantage by increasing the colonists' faith in him through the personal intercourse they were able to have with him. From the first day that the pioneer column entered Mashonaland one and all regarded Cecil Rhodes as the head of the country, and the man who would mean the difference between the success and the failure of the newly created colony. To these settlers the British South Africa Company was a name and nothing more—a body of gentlemen dwelling in far-away London, and apparently without any connection whatever with the country they were supposed to control. On the other

hand, Rhodes was at this time the dominating influence of South Africa. It was he who had brought the Kimberley diamond mines from a state of insignificance and penury to be the richest industry in the world, with a regular export of diamonds of upwards of four millions sterling per annum. It was he who, as chairman of the Consolidated Goldfields, Ltd., was one of the leading figures on the Witwatersrand. It was he who, as the head of the Government of Cape Colony, was its principal spokesman on all matters of dispute between the colony and the mother country. Lastly, it was he who was going to bring the virgin country of Mashonaland into line with the other flourishing colonies of the British Empire.

Probably these settlers were wrong in this hero-worship : indeed they have been told so often enough and in pretty forcible language by those to whom the name of Cecil Rhodes is anathema ; but they clung to their opinions with great tenacity. One and all in Mashonaland in these early days looked up to Rhodes as the ruling influence to whom they could carry their wrongs—actual or imaginary—with the knowledge that at least they would be assured of a patient hearing, and that he would do what he could to assist them and to improve their condition.

When Rhodes arrived at Salisbury he found that quite a considerable town had sprung up round the original police fort, and with the valuable assistance of Dr Rutherford Harris and Dr Jameson he at once set about doing all that he could to improve the position of those who had taken up their abode in it. He was at this time in negotiation with the Portuguese Government respecting the construction of a light

railway from the little port of Beira, on the East Coast at the mouth of the Pungwe river, to Salisbury, by which step he expected to inaugurate an era of great prosperity, not in the town of Salisbury only, but throughout the whole of Mashonaland. His scheme for a telegraph-wire to link Cape Town with the Nile and the Mediterranean was even then in his mind ; and the first section of this wire, from Cape Town as far north as Salisbury, was at that very time being pushed forward as quickly as possible.

He had not been in Salisbury long before a deputation of the settlers visited him in order to lay before him some grievances under which they considered themselves to be suffering, and to ask for their immediate redress. Prominent among these hardships, they stated, was that clause in the charter by which the British South Africa Company had the right to 50 per cent of all minerals found in the country. This the prospectors held to be very unfair, for, as they pointed out, a man might spend months of his time and nearly the whole of his capital searching for a payable gold-reef in the country, and then, so soon as he was lucky enough to come across a rich strike, the Chartered Company came down upon him with a demand for one-half of the total earnings of the mine.

In the short speech in which Rhodes answered the deputation he told them frankly that he quite realised and sympathised with their dislike for this clause. Personally, he was not in favour of it. The settlers, however, must not forget that the Chartered Company had already spent a huge sum of money, somewhere about half a million sterling, in the country, and this 50-per-cent clause was the only way in which

they could hope, not absolutely to recoup themselves for their outlay, but to make the revenue of the country approach the amount of the expenditure. In addition to this tax the only sources of revenue the company had at this time were the sales of "town stands" in Salisbury and other settlements, the post-office, and prospecting and mining licences. All of these combined only provided a comparatively small sum annually, and it was imperative for the continued existence of the British South Africa Company that this "50 - per - cent clause" should be retained.

He was quite willing, however, to give the deputation a pledge that, unless something utterly unforeseen arose that should send the expenses of administering the country very much higher than they were at that moment, the full amount of 50 per cent of the earnings of any mine in the country should never be claimed. It may be added that this full amount has never yet been enforced, the company in most cases having been content to accept 30 per cent, and even less, of a mine's earnings, while a system has been introduced whereby the various mining companies in Rhodesia have been able to compound with the Chartered Company for all future claims under this clause by the payment of a lump sum down or a suitable allotment of fully paid shares.

Various improvements of a minor nature were promised, and the deputation withdrew, smoothed, perhaps, by Mr Rhodes' persuasive eloquence, but by no means convinced that they were not being victimised for the benefit of the London and other shareholders in the British South Africa Company.

Rhodes was not able to remain so long in the

country as he would have liked, for his official position as Prime Minister of Cape Colony rendered it necessary that he should return to the south without further loss of time. Arrived at Cape Town, and well satisfied with the results of his tour through Mashonaland and the things he had seen and done, he found time now to devote himself to his other great scheme for bringing all the states of South Africa into closer union. Both in the seclusion of Groot Schuur and in the private room of the Premier in the Cape House of Parliament he gave the whole of his spare time to the furtherance of this object.

That he had spare time at all is a thing to marvel at when one considers his multifarious and arduous duties. As has been mentioned, he occupied at this time four positions, each one of which would have been sufficient to provide a man of ordinary powers with ample work. His friends often wondered how he managed to discharge at once the duties of these four positions, for, to all outward seeming at any rate, none of the positions suffered anything from their all being combined in one individual. The answer to this question is simple. Rhodes has always been able to get through the vast amount of work with which he has been confronted each day by reason, first, of the perfect system he organised, by which he was able to transact the maximum of business in the minimum of time; and, second, because of the very able lieutenants he had at his side, men able to relieve him of a great deal of the purely routine and detail duties of his offices. Had it not been for the assistance of his brothers, and men like Mr Beit, Dr Jameson, and Dr Rutherford Harris, Rhodes would have found it impossible to get through his work.

Again, his capacity for taking up and laying down a subject at will with the knowledge that he could, when next he required to turn to the matter, instantly call to mind its whole minutiae, and his tireless energy, stood him in good stead. Cecil Rhodes can stand, it is safe to say, a greater amount of fatigue and mental worry, and can work at high pressure for longer periods together, than the vast majority of his fellow-men. If the duties with which he had to cope at this time were stupendous, so, it must be admitted, was the intellect and power of the man who grappled with them.

So soon as he returned to Cape Town Rhodes wrote one of the very few long letters that he has ever penned—for he is one of the worst correspondents that it would be possible to find, and will go to any amount of trouble rather than write a letter. This communication was addressed to the secretary of the Cape Town branch of the Afrikander Bond, and dealt with the threatened trek of the Transvaal Boers into the dominions of the Chartered Company, to which reference was made in the previous chapter. It also contained some interesting statements regarding Rhodes' intentions respecting the mining regulations of Mashonaland, and the conditions under which farms would be granted to settlers in the country.

The opening paragraphs of this letter, referring to Rhodes' ideas for the settlement of the territory under the control of the British South Africa Company, are of great interest, as showing his opinion of the manner in which a new colony should be developed and the terms on which settlers should be permitted to acquire land for cultivation and stock-raising purposes. No apology is needed for their inclusion here. "The

regulations," he wrote, "regarding mining, which, as you are aware, have already been published, provide, *inter alia*, for the security of tenure by the individual miner of his claims and to render 'jumping'—which was so fruitful a source of trouble in other countries—impossible. 'Deep levels' likewise are unknown, the claim-holder following the reef through all its dips and variations. These mining regulations have been accepted generally as liberal and satisfactory. As regards the land, I think that so soon as a settlement becomes possible, farmers accustomed to practical farming should be invited into the new country in order to occupy personally and work farms whose size will naturally vary according to their suitability for pastoral or agricultural purposes. The manner in which the farms would be given out is a subject for future consideration, depending in a great measure upon the number of applicants. Should the applications exceed in number the farms available, I would then suggest that a committee of representative men (from amongst the applicants) should be appointed for the purpose of selecting and sending in the names of those whom they consider to be the most suitable farmers for the occupation and working of a new country."

Here we see very clearly Mr Rhodes' ideas with regard to the land settlement of Mashonaland at this time. His aim was to give farms out to suitable applicants at a nominal quit-rent (ultimately fixed at £3 per annum), so that none of the farmers should be handicapped at the outset by being called upon to pay a capital amount upon his land. By these means such capital as the farmer might possess would be wholly available for the stocking and development of his property.

There is another paragraph in this letter which is worthy of notice, for it sets forth in a concise manner the true attitude of Rhodes at this time towards the Boers of the Transvaal and the Free State. He writes: "Although an arrangement has already been made for the admission of over one hundred farmers from the Transvaal, and although there will be no objection when opportunity offers for the admission of others from the Transvaal, the Free State, and other South African communities, still I can give you the assurance that in the final settlement of the country—with the consent of the High Commissioner—no undue preference will be shown to them over her Majesty's subjects who may desire to proceed from this colony or from elsewhere."

This letter, it should be borne in mind, was written before the trek from the Transvaal to Mashonaland was commenced, though Rhodes had this movement in his mind at the time that he wrote this letter; for in a subsequent paragraph he says: "Every intending farmer will be required to sign a declaration that on entering the territory he will be under the flag and conform to the laws of the Chartered Company, which will be based in principle on those of the Cape Colony, with the right of appeal from the local courts to the Supreme Court at Cape Town."

"I should greatly value," he continued, "any practical suggestions which your [Afrikander Bond] members might have to make on this question of a land settlement in a new country, but I must tell you now that the Chartered Company cannot permit any other than those who are willing to place themselves under its jurisdiction to enter the territory." Nothing could be plainer or more emphatic than this statement, of

which President Kruger must have been perfectly aware at the time that he permitted the trek to go forward without let or hindrance.

In concluding this letter, Rhodes stated explicitly that should it become patent at any time that his continued occupation of the dual positions of Prime Minister of Cape Colony and managing director of the British South Africa Company was detrimental to the new settlement, he would at once resign the former post and devote himself thereafter exclusively to the development of those interior regions of Africa that he had been the means of opening up to white colonisation.

During this year Mr Rhodes revisited England in order to lay before the Imperial Government several important points with regard to the settlement of Mashonaland. He was, as he afterwards stated, "well received by every portion of the House of Commons," where a growing interest in his policy and ambitions was being manifested; and during his short stay in the country he was honoured with a command to dine with her late Majesty, who had on several occasions expressed interest in Rhodes' work, and strongly desired to meet the man who at that moment absolutely dominated South Africa.

Rhodes retained very pleasant memories of the way in which Queen Victoria received him, and of the keen interest she showed in the development of Mashonaland under the British flag. He was much surprised to find how much the Queen knew of South African politics, and at the clear and statesmanlike manner in which she referred to the future prospects of that region. Another subject in which the Queen was greatly interested was the diamond mines of Kim-

berley, and the manner in which the stones were obtained and prepared for the market.

When Rhodes quitted the royal palace he had a greatly increased admiration for the Queen's remarkable abilities; and though he has not, on the whole, a very high opinion of women's abilities and their fitness for political life, he was bound to confess that Queen Victoria was intellectually the equal of any statesman with whom he had ever come into contact.

On his return to South Africa Rhodes was at once invited to be present at the annual Congress of the Afrikander Bond, which was held at Kimberley that year. This invitation he accepted, and he made a very important speech to this gathering, which is worthy of extended notice here, if only for the light it sheds on his earnest desire to bring about the complete reconciliation of the two white races in South Africa, which he has cherished throughout the whole of his political life.

This speech is also interesting from another point of view. It contains the first public reference to Rhodes' long-cherished scheme for the foundation and endowment of a teaching university at Cape Town, where the young men of each and all of the South African states might mingle together in common fellowship, and so, by establishing a better understanding between British and Dutch, indirectly bring about a greater sympathy between the two races as the younger generation grew up.

His idea was to erect a building somewhere on the outskirts of Cape Town, which should be, so far as outward appearance went, an exact replica of Oriel College, Oxford. He hoped, so soon as this building was finished, to be able to induce the Cape

Government to endow it suitably. With this end in view he had elaborate plans of Oriel College drawn and forwarded to him; but at the eleventh hour he had, for a time at any rate, to abandon this scheme, because the Dutch community of Cape Colony, under the leadership of Mr Hofmeyr, just then opened a training-college somewhere up country, and Rhodes feared that his plan, if carried into effect, might militate against the success of this Dutch institution and so give offence to its founders. As he was particularly anxious at this time to conciliate the Dutch section of the population of Cape Colony by every means in his power, he at once stopped his preparations for the building of this teaching university, and left the matter in abeyance until a more suitable moment arrived.

The immediate effect of this speech at Kimberley, it may be mentioned, was to bring down on Rhodes' head an amount of vigorous denunciation from extremists of both the British and the Dutch parties. The 'Times' in a leading article severely chastised him for being too Afrikander in sentiment and ambition, while the 'Free State Express' gave him what he afterwards described as "a fearful slating" for being too much of an Englishman. Between the two stools of British jingoism and Afrikander ambition Rhodes came heavily to the ground, for by ingeniously taking extracts from his speech, and presenting them without reference to the context, each side was able to make out a fair case against him. However, newspaper criticism, if it never does any good, never does much harm; so Rhodes continued along the path that he saw was best for himself and the country he aspired to serve without much concern, confident that he was

doing what was best for his adopted country despite what others, who lacked the full information which he possessed, might say or think.

He prefaced his speech by saying that he was present on that occasion because he wished to show that there was nothing antagonistic between the aspirations of the people of Cape Colony and their kindred in the mother country, "provided always," he was careful to add, "that the old country recognises that the whole idea of the colonies and of the colonial people is that the principle of self-government must be observed and acted upon to the full, and that the capacity of the Cape Colony must be admitted to deal with every internal matter that may arise. The principle must be recognised in the old country, that the people born and bred in this colony, and descended from those who existed in this country many generations ago, are much better capable of dealing with the various matters that arise than people who have to dictate 7000 miles away."

There, in a sentence, is the whole of Rhodes' opinion of the position that the large, self-governing colonies should occupy towards the mother country; and when one examines the reasonableness of his views, it appears strange in the extreme that any one should be found who differs from them. The only way in which England can maintain her hold on her colonial possessions is, according to Mr Rhodes, by the granting of full and complete measures of autonomy so far as internal affairs are concerned. The right of the Imperial Government to maintain in each possession a representative in whom shall be lodged the final appeal on any subject Rhodes cheerfully accepts; but that official—call him High Commissioner, Lieutenant-

Governor, Viceroy, what you will—must never set his authority in direct opposition to the declared will of the colonists on any matter of purely internal concern.

As regards the relations between colony and colony, and colony and foreign Power, the right of supervision and control by the mother country is cheerfully admitted by Mr Rhodes, for on this bed-rock the whole fabric of the Empire rests.

In the course of this speech at Kimberley Rhodes dealt at considerable length with the objects and principles of the Bond, which he may be said to have agreed with on broad lines but differed from on matters of detail. During his remarks on this head he expressed his conviction that in reality there was no difference between the policy of the Afrikander Bond and the policy of Sir Bartle Frere. In this statement we see that daring form of speech in which Mr Rhodes delights; but those who heard him accepted this rather startling statement almost as an axiom, and it was only in England that any comment was occasioned by it.

Referring to his northern expansion scheme, he emphasised that close relationship which in his opinion should continue to exist between Cape Colony and the newly gained territory in the north.

Rhodes next dealt with the question of his proposed teaching university at Cape Town. In this connection he said: “I saw at Bloemfontein the other day the immense feeling of friendship that all the members had for the Grey Institute, where they had been educated and from which they had gone out into the world. I said to myself, ‘If we could only get a teaching university founded in Cape Colony, taking the people from Bloemfontein, Pretoria, and Natal, having

the young men going in there from the ages of eighteen to twenty-one, they will go back to the Free State, to the Transvaal, and to Natal—let me even say they will go back to Mashonaland—tied to one another by the strongest feelings that can be created, because the period in your life when you indulge in friendships that are seldom broken is from the age of eighteen to twenty-one.' Therefore, if we had a teaching residential university, these young men would go forth into all parts of South Africa prepared to make the future of the country, and in their hands this great question of union could safely be left."

To those who are fond of picturing Mr Rhodes as a grasping and unscrupulous money-grabber, actuated by no worthy impulses or motives, I would commend the above extract, for a careful perusal of it should go far to convince all whom envy and hatred of the man and his works have not combined to render blind that even Cecil Rhodes is not so black as he is sometimes painted.

During 1891 the discontent in Cape Colony against one man combining the two offices of Prime Minister of the colony and managing director of the British South Africa Company reached its height; but it soon subsided on Mr Rhodes putting the plain question before the malcontents as to whether they considered it was better that he should withdraw altogether from political life at the Cape and devote himself exclusively to the development of Mashonaland, or whether he should continue at the head of the Cape Government. For his own part, he would not have greatly regretted being able to devote the whole of his time and energies to the colonisation of Mashonaland, but when they were confronted with the only alternative,

those who had been loudest in their clamour against Rhodes' dual position withdrew their protests, and nothing further was heard of the "impossibility" of one man filling two offices which, from the point of view of the opposition, were so diametrically opposed.

CHAPTER XIV.

AT WAR WITH THE MATABELE.

EARLY in November 1892 Rhodes sailed for England in order to address the second annual meeting of the British South Africa Company. In the course of this speech he explained in detail the reasons which had led him, in conjunction with the directors of the Chartered Company, to introduce the “50-per-cent clause” into the mining laws of Mashonaland. As has previously been explained, it was from this source alone that Rhodes hoped to gain a dividend for the shareholders in the company. He was strongly of the opinion that a chartered company should not be at liberty to tax a country for the profit of its shareholders, any more than a Crown colony or an elected government should be permitted to impose taxes for the sake of amassing a handsome surplus annually. His idea was so to arrange things that the receipts from mining licencees, post-offices and telegraphs, customs, sales of land, &c., in Mashonaland balanced the annual expenditure. As soon as this was done, he would hold his hand and refrain from imposing any further burdens.

There was, however, that great body of people who had entrusted their money to him. How was he to repay them? That was the question Rhodes asked

himself, and the only answer he could hit upon was the 50-per-cent clause. He had been struck when a young man at Kimberley, just embarking upon political life, with the enormous benefit which would have accrued to the Government of Cape Colony if, when they were granting licences to prospectors to peg out claims on the diamond-fields, instead of limiting each man to one claim, as was the custom, they had granted him five claims, being two and a-half to be worked for his own personal profit and two and a-half to be worked for the benefit of the Government; or, in other words, when he floated his claims as a company, as he would be almost bound to do sooner or later, one-half of the vendor scrip was to be handed over to the Government of the colony.

Rhodes saw that if this had been done, the financial difficulties which hung over the colony for so long a period would have been avoided, and the Government would have had sufficient money in its coffers for nearly any undertaking. The same reasoning applied to the Witwatersrand goldfields. Rhodes was surprised that the Transvaal executive, instead of limiting each prospector to a single claim and allowing him only to work that to a certain level, did not grant each individual a block of ten claims, of which five were to be worked in the interests of the state.

This scheme, whereby 50 per cent of the vendor scrip became the property of the Government of a country, was entirely new, but Rhodes was determined to give it a trial. When, therefore, the regulations under which gold and other mining in Mashonaland was to be permitted were promulgated, he introduced this clause, which, even if it has not done all that Rhodes hoped it would, and enabled him to pay a

dividend to the shareholders in the Chartered Company, has on the whole worked very satisfactorily.

This speech to the shareholders of the Chartered Company in November 1892 is noteworthy for one passage which, read in the light of after-events, seems strange, and to point to the fact that Cecil Rhodes does not always possess that great amount of penetration and far-sightedness with which he is usually credited. Speaking of the development of Mashonaland, he said: "Our relations are friendly all round. I am on the best of terms with President Kruger. Our differences with the Portuguese are over, and we are on the most friendly terms with Lobengula. The latter receives a globular sum of £100 a-month in sovereigns, and he looks forward with great satisfaction to the day of the month when he will receive it. *I have not the least fear of any trouble in the future from Lobengula.*" In about six months afterwards Lobengula and the white settlers in Mashonaland were at open war.

More than once Rhodes has been twitted with this optimistic speech on the eve of the outbreak of the Matabele war by those who—since the event, and always according to themselves—had all along been able to foresee that sooner or later the fierce and warlike Matabele tribe would rise against the rule of the white man who had overrun Mashonaland to the serious curtailment of their privileges. As those who read the daily and weekly press will have observed, it is so very easy to be wise after the event!

It was in this year, 1892, that the affairs of the British South Africa Company were at their lowest ebb. It really seemed as though Rhodes, in attempting to colonise with Europeans the vast country to the

north of the Limpopo, had undertaken a task beyond even his powers. In every way the outlook was black. The settlers in Mashonaland were in a state of simmering discontent. Many of them who had hastily quitted England, eager to amass rapid fortunes in the new El Dorado, were tremendously disappointed to find that the winning of wealth by gold-mining was by no means so easy as they had imagined, and that months of arduous toil were required before any profits could be earned. Hence with this disillusionment came long and bitter wails and savage attacks on the country and all belonging to it by those who in reality had only their own absurd optimism to blame for the straits in which they found themselves.

Financially, too, the state of things was about as bad as it well could be. The shares of the Chartered Company were only worth about 10s. or 12s., and a general distrust in Mashonaland and its prospects was beginning to be manifested, while the capital of the company was almost entirely expended. Rhodes perceived that it was necessary for him to make a supreme effort if he was to retain his grip on the country. In his difficulties he turned to Dr Jameson, and begged him to go up to Mashonaland as administrator, and to do what he could towards bringing about the dawn of brighter times and to make the revenue of the country approach the annual expenditure.

Dr Jameson at this time was only just recovering from a severe attack of malarial fever, but he thrust his physical weakness in the background and declared himself quite prepared to come to the assistance of his old friend. He set off almost at once for Salisbury, while Rhodes on his part remained behind at Cape

Town to do all that lay in his power to improve the prospects of Mashonaland. It should be pointed out that he had never for a moment lost faith in the country or imagined that his great scheme was doomed to end in utter failure and ruin. Cecil Rhodes, whatever else he may be, is not a fool, and had he been convinced that the country he had been the means of adding to the Empire was not worth holding, he would not have hesitated long before withdrawing his support from it and winding up his company. He knew, however, that the potential resources of the land were very great, and that if the ugly corner which then confronted him could be turned in safety, all would afterwards be comparatively plain sailing.

When Dr Jameson took up the control of Mashonaland he found things in a parlous state financially. There was a white population of about 1500 persons in the country in a state of latent discontent. The upkeep of an excessively large police force was costing annually a huge sum that was out of all proportion to the revenue of the country, and in addition to the pay of this large and almost useless body of men there was the question of feeding them,—for the importation of provisions into the country at this time cost the high figure of £70 per ton, every ounce of food having to be transported by ox-waggon over 1700 miles of country. So soon, however, as Jameson had time to look about him he saw his way towards greatly reducing the expenditure in nearly every direction, and he arranged to meet Rhodes in order to talk the matter over with him. "Give me £3000 a-month," said Jameson at this conference, "and I can pull through." Rhodes was rather dubious about the

possibility of the country being administered for so small a sum, but the confident tone of his lieutenant removed his doubts, so he made arrangements to supply Jameson with the monthly sum asked for, and the latter set about his task.

Jameson's first step was, to put it mildly, extremely hazardous. It was nothing less than the reduction of the police force from 700 men to 40, and the establishment of a volunteer force at Salisbury in order in some measure to counterbalance this reduction. By so doing he saved a large sum annually, it is true; but to leave the country practically without a disciplined force on which to rely in times of need, while at the same time the Matabele impis of young and impetuous soldiers collected on the boundary between their country and Mashonaland in a manner that can only be described as threatening, was, to say the least, an extremely risky thing to do. Dr Jameson justified his policy by pointing to the volunteer force he had established in Salisbury, and to the fact that under the conditions on which they were permitted to settle in the country every able-bodied man was liable for military service if the need arose. Further, as Rhodes had foreshadowed in his speech to the members of the British South Africa Company previously referred to, there were no indications at this time that Lobengula would be unable to control his young soldiers, or would fail to observe his obligations under the Rudd-Maguire concession.

Be this as it may, the war with the Matabele followed with significant suddenness on the disbandment of the police; and few can doubt that if events in the war had gone differently and less fortunately than they did, and the Matabele had gained the upper

hand, Dr Jameson would have been very severely censured for this sudden disbandment of the Mashonaland police. There can be no question that the country could not afford to maintain this large force of police, but it would have been far better policy to have gradually withdrawn them, say, by squads of fifty at a time, spread over a period of about two years. In various other and safer ways Dr Jameson effected economies until he had finally managed to reduce the expenditure from a quarter of a million a-year to £30,000.

So soon as this was done, Rhodes was free to turn his attention to other matters, for now that the expenditure in Mashonaland about balanced the income, a great load was lifted from his mind. Chief among these was a railway to Mashonaland from the East Coast. By this step he hoped to reduce the cost of importing food-stuff's into the country from £70 per ton to £10, which was about the same amount that it cost to get provisions up to Johannesburg. He found it a very difficult task to obtain the money for the construction of this line, for the outside public in England refused almost unanimously to have anything to do with it. This being so, he was forced to rely upon the generosity of his friends, who, it should be stated, responded liberally to his appeal. Lord Rothschild, for instance, though he had always been very sceptical as to the Chartered Company ever justifying its existence or paying its way, subscribed £25,000 towards the building of this railway line between Beira and Salisbury. Despite this assistance, however, Rhodes had to provide fully five-sixths of the necessary capital for the line out of his own pocket.

Hence when the attitude of the Matabele towards

the settlers became more and more threatening as 1893 drew on, Rhodes was at his wits' end as to what he should do in the event of an outbreak of hostilities. On the one hand he saw that the cost of a successful campaign against the Matabele would probably result in the bankruptcy of the British South Africa Company, while on the other hand the settlers openly declared their intention to trek from the country if something was not quickly done to check the raids of Lobengula's braves, which daily grew in daring.

Remonstrances were addressed to the Matabele king, but none had any tangible result; for the wily old savage blandly apologised for the misdeeds of his young men, and promised that they should not offend in the future, and then, apparently, washed his hands of the whole affair and let his impis carry on just as they chose without any interference.

This being the case, it was not surprising to find that matters rapidly approached a crisis. "Temporise! temporise!" was Rhodes' constant cry to Jameson when the latter reported to him the growing indignation of the dwellers in Mashonaland at the Matabele raiders being permitted to go unpunished, and long and bitter complaints were made as to the supineness of the Chartered Company. The Matabele, too, grew bolder and bolder when they saw that the white men did not attempt to prevent their inroads into Mashonaland or repel their attacks on the less warlike tribes which inhabited that region.

At length the climax came. Lobengula threw off the mask he had worn so long and announced his intention to march his impis into Mashonaland to assert his rights, to dispose of "his slaves" the Mashonas in any way he chose, and to avenge several

fancied slights. The white men, announced the Matabele king, would be quite safe from attack so long as they remained neutral and did not attempt to protect the Mashonas, for he had no quarrel with them. Needless to say, neither Dr Jameson nor the settlers in the country had the slightest intention of meekly sitting down and watching the bloodthirsty Matabele wreak their fiendish vengeance on the weaker tribes of Mashonaland.

However, before the Chartered Company could take any adequate precaution, a large force of Matabele had crossed the border and made straight for Victoria, where the greater portion of the Mashona tribe had collected. Message after message was despatched by Dr Jameson to Lobengula demanding the instant recall of his impis, but without avail; so the administrator took the only other course which was left open to him, and moved down the police under Captain Lendy to afford some small measure of protection to the Mashonas. Before this little force could reach Victoria, however, the Matabele had arrived there and were massacring and burning in all directions.

Naturally the white people in Victoria were greatly angered by the terrible scenes which were being enacted before their eyes. Dr Jameson lost no time in hurrying to the spot, and, arrived there, in immediately summoning the principal Matabele indunas to an indaba. At this meeting he told the assembled chiefs in plain terms that they must forthwith return to their own country under penalty of instant execution. This forcible language had its effect. With difficulty the indunas managed to restrain their warriors from further rapine. The incident seemed

to be at an end, when a small section of the Matabele soldiers declined to return without a further attack on the Mashonas, and continued to harry the panic-stricken tribes in open defiance of the white police, who were spectators of the scene. Anxious to do all that was possible to prevent an open rupture between the white people and the Matabele, Dr Jameson gave the latter until sunset to withdraw and set off for their own country; but this had no effect. As the limit which the administrator had fixed drew near, and the Matabele still persisted in attacking the tribes, Captain Lundy decided to move up his police closer to the scene, hoping that such a step would either drive the Matabele away or would enable him to place some of the ringleaders under arrest.

Maddened with the lust of blood as the Matabele were at this time, and recking little of the consequences, they opened fire on the white police. The white men, furious at the dreadful scenes they had been compelled passively to witness, were nothing loath to retaliate. They fired one or two volleys into the ranks of the Matabele, and then rode straight at them in a wild charge, with the result that the Matabele turned and fled in all directions.

Thus the first act of the war with the Matabele was embarked upon, and Cecil Rhodes was confronted with the task of finding the money for what promised to be a very long and costly struggle at the time that the finances of the Chartered Company were ill fitted to stand such a strain, and when his own private capital was almost entirely locked up in the telegraph scheme from Cape Town to the north and the railway from Beira to Salisbury.

It was clear, however, that the Matabele would

have to be taught a severe lesson, and that the recent outrages could not be passed over unnoticed by the white government of Mashonaland. When Dr Jameson sent a full account of what had taken place around Victoria, Rhodes replied by telegraphing the laconic and enigmatic message, "Read Luke xiv. 31." Jameson took the hint, and turning to the verse in question, saw that it ran as follows: "Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?"

This meant, of course, Could Jameson, with the small force at his disposal, which would probably not number more than a thousand white men, hope to wage a successful war against the Matabele hordes, whose prestige in war at this time was only slightly less than that of the Zulu tribe in the days of Cetewayo?

After considering the matter for a short time, and consulting with those about him, Dr Jameson thought that he could conduct such a campaign with success, and therefore telegraphed to Rhodes at Cape Town: "All right. Have read Luke xiv. 31."

Jameson saw that if he was to open a campaign against the Matabele, he must do so without a moment's loss of time. Only thus would he be in a position to strike a decisive blow before the approach of the rainy season rendered hostilities almost a matter of impossibility. Therefore he hurriedly called for volunteers, who quickly offered themselves and were as quickly enrolled and organised. Their principal need was for horses, of which the supply was very short; but Rhodes managed to

procure 900 in a very short time, and these were at once sent up to Salisbury.

During this time Rhodes was faced by another difficulty besides that of providing money and horses for the campaign, and this was the Colonial Office. The Marquis of Ripon, at this time the Secretary of State for the Colonies, embarked on a cautious and hesitating policy that proved very irritating to the impulsive and petulant character of Rhodes. Sir Henry Loch, in his capacity as High Commissioner of the Cape, had laid the facts of the case for and against the Matebele very clearly and concisely before the home authorities. In the end, after much cogitation and endless letter-writing and discussion of precedents, Downing Street woke up sufficiently to write to the High Commissioner ordering him to inform the British South Africa Company and Mr Rhodes "that unless they" (*i.e.*, the white forces of the Chartered Company) "were attacked, no aggressive movement was to be made without the previous knowledge and sanction of the High Commissioner." This was, of course, quite correct, but hardly necessary, for with an empty treasury the very last thing either Rhodes or the company desired was a war with the Matabele.

The next portion of the telegram, however, was most extraordinary, and after reading it few people will be surprised at the amused contempt that Cecil Rhodes feels towards Downing Street and all its works. "If your sanction for an offensive movement is asked," continued Lord Ripon to Sir Henry Loch, "you will communicate with me before replying." In other words, the opinions of Dr Jameson at Salisbury, and of Cecil Rhodes and Sir Henry Loch

at Cape Town, were to be examined, and possibly overruled, by Lord Ripon and his assistants at Downing Street, 7000 miles away, not one of whom could probably have stated offhand with any degree of accuracy where Mashonaland was, what was its area, or how the Matabele tribe came to have anything to do with it. This delay meant that weeks, or even months, would have to elapse before Dr Jameson was able to take advantage of any victory he might have gained. It is only after reading of such follies as these that one is able to understand fully the reasons which led the American colonists to sever their connection with the mother country.

In the end the consent of the Colonial Office was obtained, and Jameson at once crossed the Shangani river and entered Matabeleland with a force that at no time exceeded 900 men. At the same time that this movement was undertaken, Major Goold-Adams, the commandant of the Bechuanaland Border Police, acting under instructions from the High Commissioner, moved towards Matabeleland from the south with some 200 men. The object of this move was to compel Lobengula to detach a portion of his force from opposing Dr Jameson on the east to watch the drifts on the south-west. By so doing, Jameson's task was rendered very much easier than otherwise it would have been.

It is outside the scope of this book to deal in detail with the events of the Matabele war, save so far as they directly concern Mr Rhodes, and I can only refer those who desire a fuller account of this campaign to my 'History of Rhodesia.' Suffice it to say here that two pitched battles were fought, the first near the Shangani river and the second on the banks of the

Imbembesi stream, and that in both of these the Matabele, though outnumbering the whites by fully ten to one, were totally defeated with very heavy loss, and their power as an organised force was completely broken.

These successive defeats, and the inability of his soldiers to make any stand against the white columns which were converging on his capital, led Lobengula hastily to abandon his principal kraal of Gu-Buluwayo, and to trek to the north-west with Major Forbes and a strong white force hot on his heels. It was this portion of the campaign which led up to the saddest, and at the same time the most dramatic, episode of the war—the heroic deaths of Major Alan Wilson and his companions, who refused to abandon their wounded comrades when without them they might have got away in safety.

Such a gallant deed as this strongly appealed to Rhodes, who, so soon as he was able, visited the spot where the devoted band died, and immediately commissioned Mr John Tweed, the well-known sculptor, to prepare four huge bronze bas-reliefs representing various phases of the Matabele war, to form part of a large monument which, at his own cost, he has since raised on the spot to the memory of Major Wilson and his men.

So soon as he could possibly escape from his political duties at Cape Town, rendered doubly irksome to him by the stirring news from the north, Rhodes hurried up to Matabeleland, and was in time to set off towards the Shangani with the column that Dr Jameson was sending off to bring in Major Forbes' force, which was reported to be short of both food and ammunition, and to be followed by a large body of

Matabele, who gained heart when they saw the white men giving way before them.

With the return of Major Forbes' column to Dr Jameson's base camp, near the abandoned and half-ruined kraal of Buluwayo, which Lobengula had attempted to wreck with gunpowder prior to his quitting it, the war may be said to have come to an end. Contrary to all expectations, the campaign had been very short, and the whole cost of it was only about £100,000—a small amount, indeed, when the expense of such a war as that waged by the Imperial Government against the Zulus is considered.

Sapient people at home, who could not have distinguished a Matabele from a Batalpin had their lives depended on it, had attacked Rhodes on the outbreak of the war for thinking to carry out a successful war against the Matabele with less than a thousand white men, all of whom were untrained volunteers, when they themselves had fully made up their minds that at least ten times that number of Imperial troops would be required, and that even then it would take quite a year and a million of money before Lobengula's power could be broken.

The white force had no sooner collected once more at Buluwayo than the news reached them that Lobengula had died of smallpox; and with this announcement came the complete submission of the Matabele nation. The country was at once thrown open to white colonisation. The volunteers, who had formed the bulk of Dr Jameson's force, were immediately disbanded, and proceeded to scour the country in all directions in search of payable gold-reefs and other mineral deposits. In disbanding the force Mr Rhodes made a short speech, some extracts from which may be fittingly

given here. After referring to the excellent way in which the little body of men had carried out the work of conquering the Matabele in such a short space of time, he spoke in bitter but fully warranted terms of the cruel slanders which a small but extremely noisy and self-assertive minority at home had seen fit to utter against far better men than themselves. He said: "In England a certain section thought the usual consequence was sure to ensue, and require like action, as in other colonial wars. An appeal would be made to her Majesty's Government for assistance, they said; but no! we relied on the brave efforts of our own men, and they have done the work."

"You would have thought," he went on, "that the English would have been satisfied. On the contrary, you have been called freebooting marauders, blood-thirsty murderers, and so forth. But I know this has not been by the people of England as a whole, but only by a section of them. I am as loyal an Englishman as any one possibly can be, but I cannot help saying that it is such conduct as this that alienates colonists from the mother country. We ask for nothing, for neither men nor money, and still a certain portion vilify us. There are no people more loyal than the colonists in Africa, but continued misrepresentation will alienate the most loyal."

Apparently the separation of the large self-governing colonies from the Empire was, and is, exactly what these slanderous and venomous nonentities desire above all things; and if so, they are certainly going the right way to work to bring such a state of things about.

Turning his attention more particularly to the

fitting reward of those men who had done the work and had broken the Matabele power, Mr Rhodes promised that before any other consideration regarding the settlement of the country was discussed, he would examine their claims. At the time that the force was raised certain promises of grants of land and mining rights in Matabeleland, to be allotted to each man so soon as Matabeleland was opened for white settlement, were made, and Rhodes now confirmed these, though he was careful to add that everything he did or said was subject to the approval of the High Commissioner, whom he intended immediately to consult on the subject.

With a keen eye to the fitness of things, and a certain fondness for theatrical effect that is so often to be noticed in his character, Rhodes gave instructions before he left Matabeleland for Cape Town that the future capital of the country was to be laid out on the site of the old kraal of Gu-Buluwayo, and that this town was to bear the name of Buluwayo—or Bulawayo, as it is now officially called. It was his intention that Government House, the future official residence of the administrator of Matabeleland, should be built on the exact spot formerly occupied by the royal hut. When, however, the surveyors came to lay out the future town, they were unanimously of the opinion that such a position was quite unsuited for that purpose; so that the present town stands some two miles to the north-west of the old kraal, and close to a small stream, which yields a good supply of water for all purposes.

The next question, which, perhaps, was only one of minor importance, was the name under which the whole country was to be known in the future. The

two provinces of Mashonaland and Matabeleland were easy enough to designate, but what was wanted was some title by which to describe the whole country under the dominion of the British South Africa Company. With this end in view many names were suggested, but all were more or less unsuitable. "British Central Africa" would have been the ideal name for the country, but it had been already appropriated for the little strip of territory along the western shore of Lake Nyasa, under the administration of the Foreign Office. "British South Africa" was quite out of the question, as the assumption of such a title would have rightly produced vigorous protests from the far older possessions of Cape Colony and Natal. In the end it was decided to embody in some form or another the name of the man who had, almost unaided, founded the state; and after "Rhodesland," and the more fanciful "Cecilia," had been proposed and rejected, the word "Rhodesia" was finally coined, and at once passed into the geography of the world.

CHAPTER XV.

RHODES AND THE NATIVE QUESTION.

IT is not my purpose to discuss the ethical question whether white men are justified in occupying a country inhabited by native races and in reducing those natives to a position of semi-serfdom, or at any rate in enforcing their laws and customs on such native inhabitants. I will content myself with facts as they are, and look at this question from the standpoint taken up by Cecil Rhodes. As has been seen, Mr Rhodes' aim throughout the whole of his career has been to bring about a reconciliation between the Dutch and the British in South Africa. Second only in importance to that great work has been his continuous effort to secure the good and just government of the native races in the sub-continent. None realises more clearly than he that in South Africa the spread of white colonisation and white civilisation is bound to be, under any circumstances, one of particular difficulty, and fraught with hardships for the natives; but it cannot be denied that he has striven for many years with all the might of his forceful nature to mitigate these difficulties and hardships as much as possible, and on the whole with a fair amount of success.

It was on the Native question that the first line of cleavage between Rhodes and the members of the Afrikander Bond, who were numbered at this time among his supporters and allies, began to show itself. The "flag" difficulty, which was introduced into the ideal of a United South Africa shared by both Rhodes and the Afrikanders, was one which might easily have been surmounted by a little negotiation and discussion between Rhodes and those who fought beneath the banner of Mr Hofmeyr; but Rhodes' experience with regard to the Glen Grey Act showed him that a more thorny subject would have to be overcome with regard to the Native question. His is not the nature, however, to meet difficulties half-way, and having made up his mind on the rights and wrongs of this question, he took up his stand resolutely for what he believed to be the wisest and only just line of conduct, and was deaf to all pleas and demands to abandon or modify his attitude.

His first real step towards the carrying out of his scheme for the government and improvement of the native races of South Africa was in 1894, at the time he was the Secretary for Native Affairs as well as Prime Minister at the Cape. In July of that year he moved the second reading of his bill which dealt with the condition of the natives in Cape Colony, since generally known as the Glen Grey Act, and in a speech of great power and width of thought set forth his ideas on this question very clearly. The bill was primarily intended to secure a re-survey of the Kafir reservations, the land being for the purpose of the bill divided into allotments of eight acres each, and it was his intention to give an individual title to each of these allotments, with the right of descent from father

to eldest son by the chief wife, by the operation of the law of entail.

A simple system of local self-government for the natives, to be improved and extended as time went on and the natives proved themselves fit for it, was also included. This local self-government was to consist in the first place of village and district councils, on which a proportion of natives would sit side by side with the white members. It was his idea further to encourage the natives to improve themselves by providing, as I shall explain later, educational facilities, and by intrusting to them various public works, such as the making of roads and the building of bridges, of course under white supervision and direction. In this manner he hoped to prevent the overcrowding of the native locations—at that time a pressing question—and to turn the idle male native population of Cape Colony into industrious and useful citizens, to whom the franchise would, with suitable safeguards, be given.

The scheme was by no means perfect—few human schemes are perfect ; but it was undoubtedly a statesmanlike effort to grapple with a problem that yielded to none in magnitude and complexity. This great effort of Rhodes in endeavouring to smooth the path of the native population of South Africa is often overlooked and discounted by reason of his other, and perhaps more dazzling, works ; but this alone was sufficient to stamp him as a man of undoubted ability, and one possessing the courage of his convictions.

It should be said that the right of the educated and semi-civilised portion of the black population of Cape Colony to a limited form of the franchise had always been admitted in theory by the Cape Dutch, and in the eyes of the law of that colony blacks and whites

were on a precisely equal footing. The natives had, practically speaking, the same civil rights as the whites possessed, though there were, of course, some special police regulations which were rendered necessary by the conditions which then prevailed in the various native locations. With the establishment of self-government at the Cape, the granting of political rights to the blacks had been carried out; and in this particular Cape Colony differed from its sister state of Natal, where it is a standing reproach to this day that no coloured persons, not even the highly educated and perfectly civilised immigrant British Indian merchants and planters, are allowed the right to a vote.

It was, I believe I am right in saying, in the year 1892 that Rhodes first decided on his line of conduct with regard to the native question, though, as has just been said, it was not until two years later that he found himself in a position to move in the matter. He fixed a moderately high property qualification for the natives, the ownership of a house of the value of £75, or in default the receipt of an annual wage of £50, with the reasonable proviso that before any native should be allowed to take any part in the government of his district he should be able to sign his name together with his address and his occupation. This is the same law as is applied for the white population of Cape Colony, and was fixed upon in order to debar from the franchise those natives who are still in a state of barbarism, and are living together in what may be termed a debased form of communal tenure. At first this Act of Rhodes was only intended to apply to Glen Grey district of Cape Colony—hence the popular name of the measure; but it was his intention to

extend it to the other districts so soon as the natives demonstrated their fitness for the franchise.

Rhodes had gained his wide knowledge of natives and their characters principally from close study of them as they were assembled in the compounds of Kimberley, where he spent many hours at a stretch, mingling with them and studying them from every point. He enjoyed the society of natives, regarding it as affording him a unique psychological opportunity, and he has not a trace of that distaste for blacks and their ways which unfortunately is carried to such extreme lengths by the vast majority of whites—Afrikanders and British alike—resident in South Africa. His servants at Groot Schuur are almost exclusively natives, being drawn from nearly every different tribe and race to be found in Africa between the Cape of Good Hope and Lake Tanganyika, and by one and all of these he is, as I have remarked in an earlier chapter, simply worshipped.

A most important element in the Glen Grey Act was its regulations for the sale of intoxicating liquors to the natives. Rhodes' idea in this direction was to grant a form of local option, and the result of this must have come as a surprise even to Rhodes himself. Prior to the passing of this Act the jail at Glen Grey was always crowded with native prisoners, nine-tenths of whom were there through offences directly traceable to the free traffic in drink, which up to the passing of this Act prevailed in Cape Colony. Six months after the passing of the bill the jail was found to be absolutely empty, and investigation proved that crime was almost a thing unknown in that district when the sale of liquor to the natives had been put a stop to. Advocates of the adoption of the principles of local

option in this country should find the results of the Glen Grey Act among the ignorant but drink-loving natives of Cape Colony one of their most powerful arguments.

Naturally this diminution of the sale of drink was not at all to the taste of the Dutch wine-growers at the Cape. They violently attacked Rhodes, for they saw their profits falling off day by day and week by week in what must have appeared to them a very exasperating fashion. Had it not been that one clause of the bill, which insisted on a native following some regular employment before the franchise was granted him, was much to the liking of the large employers of labour in the colony, it is likely that ultimately Rhodes would have been defeated by the Afrikander party in his efforts to keep the drink away from the natives. As it was, these employers found that labour was more plentiful, and that the workmen were more reliable and trustworthy than they had ever been before; so they rallied to Rhodes' support in large numbers, and he was thereby enabled to confront with success the savage attacks of the wine-growers of the midland districts of Cape Colony.

When the British South Africa Company took over the control of Rhodesia, Mr Rhodes at once decided that the provisions of the Glen Grey Act should be included in the charter, and this was done, as will be seen by a reference to clause 12 of that document, which runs as follows: "The company shall regulate the traffic in spirits and other intoxicating liquors within the territories aforesaid [*i.e.*, the whole country to be placed under the dominion of the company], so as, as far as is practicable, to pre-

vent the sale of spirits or other intoxicating liquors to any natives."

This obligation the company loyally observed, and so soon as the country, with its native population, estimated at one million, came under its administration, it passed very severe laws against the supplying of any form of intoxicating liquors to natives. As has proved to be the case in North America, and still more on the West Coast of Africa, there are always plenty of white adventurers eager to rush into a new country which possesses a large native population, and amass rapid fortunes by selling the vilest and cheapest brands of "trade spirits" to the natives, regardless of the mischief and ruin they are causing by so doing. Rhodesia proved to be no exception to this rule, for on the opening of both Mashonaland and Matabeleland to white colonisation men rushed in from all directions and commenced selling spirits to the natives. The stern, repressive measures of the British South Africa Company soon put a stop to this, however, and a great evil was thereby nipped in the bud.

Rhodes' policy towards the natives with regard to this liquor question has been aptly described as being exactly similar to that we are in the habit of employing when dealing with young children—giving them just what our riper and more mature judgment tells us is good for them, and putting out of their reach all those things which we feel would do them harm. While, however, providing that this Act should be largely of a protective nature, Rhodes did not lose sight of the fact that it should be educative as well. In his speech on the second reading of the Glen Grey Act on July 30, 1894, to which allusion has pre-

viously been made in this chapter, Rhodes prefaced his remarks by protesting against the idea that the natives were a source of trouble and loss to the colony,—a very favourite doctrine with certain politicians in Cape Town at that time. Passing to the question of the provisions of the bill, Mr Rhodes said that what faced him when he took up the portfolio of Secretary for Native Affairs was the enormous extent and ramifications of the native problem. What, he was forced to ask himself, as many thoughtful men in South Africa had been forced to ask themselves before him—what was the present state of the natives, and how could it best be improved? By the wise government of the white men, the old diminution of the numbers of the natives by war and pestilence no longer occurred. The good and stable administration of the colony prevented the blacks from fighting, and the result, therefore, was an enormous increase in their numbers, and their locations were rapidly becoming too small for all those who had to find shelter therein.

The question before the Legislature, as Rhodes put it, was, What was to become of these natives? "At present," he remarked, in that terse, downright manner to which he is so greatly addicted, "we give them nothing to do, because we have taken away their power of making war—an excellent pursuit in its way," he added, with a touch of that cynicism and love of perplexing his auditors which he so often displays—"which once employed their minds. The man who has nothing to do," he continued, "turns to the canteen."

On the whole, he was not in favour of giving the natives any share in the government of the country,

for he considered that they were intellectually unfitted to undertake such a task; but he proposed to give them some voice in the local administration of their own districts. The native knew absolutely nothing about the politics of the country, or the many questions affecting its government, and probably cared even less. "Leave us alone," a native chief had said some years previously to Rhodes when the latter was speaking to him on the subject of native legislation, "but let us try and deal with some of our own little local questions."

Speaking of the Native question, which was then nearly as burning a topic in Cape Colony as it is in Rhodesia at the present time, Mr Rhodes pointed out that if the agriculture of the country was to prosper, as it was necessary for the wellbeing of the colony that it should prosper, it was imperative that some scheme should be devised to induce the natives to work in greater numbers than was the case at that time, and by so doing to tend to reduce the wages, which then were absurdly high. As Mr Rhodes in the course of his speech pointed out, the wage of the agricultural labourer in England is about 12s. a-week, and few will be disposed to dispute the fact that these labourers certainly live at a higher standard of civilisation than the Kafirs of Cape Colony; yet these Kafirs were then actually receiving 50 per cent more wages than the English labourers at home.

In explaining his view to the House of Assembly, Rhodes was very careful to emphasise the fact that he was strongly opposed to what may perhaps be termed the extreme humanitarian view. He did not believe, and few sensible people will be found to believe, that all the laws and privileges which are

enjoyed by the white colonist should suddenly and without any preparatory training be granted to the natives. In a phrase which illustrated his view of this subject with great clearness, he compared the natives of Cape Colony at the present time to the fellow-tribesmen of the Druids of ancient Britain who had come to life after a lapse of two thousand years since their prior existence, and he expressed the opinion that those who advocated the granting of full political rights to the natives were anxious to get rid of the two thousand years of civilisation which lie between the white population of South Africa and the natives.

After dealing in his speech at considerable length and with great lucidity with the question of the principle of primogeniture as applied to the land titles of the native locations, Mr Rhodes passed on to the question of the labour tax, which it was his purpose to introduce as a necessary preliminary to the granting of the franchise. Many young and able-bodied men, he pointed out, living in the native locations, were, as he put it, like younger sons at home or like young men about town. What he meant by this happy simile was that these young natives dwelt in the locations of their tribes with their parents, and never dreamt of doing one stroke of work. "Their present life," Rhodes continued, pursuing the comparison he had just drawn, "is very similar to that of a young man about town who lounges about a club during the day, dresses himself up for tea-party in the afternoon, and in the evening drinks too much, and probably finishes up with immorality."

From the foregoing remark it will be gathered that

Cecil Rhodes is no lover of the idler, be his colour black or white. As a matter of fact, the sight of the many pale-faced, weak-kneed dandies who throng Piccadilly and Bond Street in the season rouses the whole of his cynicism and the scorn of his volcanic nature, and he is apt at such times to give expression to very bitter and scathing remarks against a society which can produce and encourage such brainless creatures. Rhodes can forgive much in a man or woman—no one is more conscious of his own shortcomings than he, and possibly this is the reason of his tolerance for the failures of others; but idleness and aimlessness of life in his eyes are unpardonable sins.

Advocating the imposition of an annual tax of 10s. on all able-bodied male natives in the colony, Rhodes pointed out that by so doing they would get hold of these “gilded youths” of the tribes and make them go out to work. As they were then living, these young natives were entirely destitute of any object in life. They had no cows, and therefore no chance of obtaining a wife.

So soon as a native could produce evidence of being in regular employment he was to be exempt from this labour tax, and Rhodes proposed to devote the money which accrued from the tax to the purpose of erecting native schools in each district, to be carried on under direct Government supervision, where the natives should be taught all things that were necessary for them to know in order to become of use to themselves, their tribes, and their country. At this stage Rhodes paused to enter a badly needed protest against the methods of the missionary schools which had been established throughout the colony. Referring more

especially to the Transkei district, he said that he had in his tours through this portion of the colony found some excellent institutions where natives were being taught Latin and Greek. These schools were turning out native parsons by the score, but the thing, in his opinion, was being overdone. Native parsons, he did not hesitate to say, were becoming more plentiful than congregations. Thus a dangerous class was being evolved. These native preachers were excellent so long as their number was limited, but at that time the supply was out of all proportion to the demand. The parsons, after the education they had received, felt it undignified for them to return to manual labour; consequently the country was gradually becoming infested with unemployed men of good education, and in many cases of considerable ability, who would in the end develop into agitators of the most pernicious kind. He held that the Government should have the control of these schools.

Passing from this subject, he devoted himself next to the question of the sale of liquor to natives. His plan was, as has already been mentioned, a system of local option, but with compensation for such canteen-owners as had had their licences withdrawn; for, as he pointed out, these owners of canteens had for some years been encouraged to extend and improve their buildings, and therefore it would be manifestly unfair to veer round suddenly and close these establishments without any compensation. To the credit of the Cape Legislature it should be said that it at once saw the reasonableness of this view and assented to it.

In this bill Rhodes had wisely inserted a clause providing that no native in the possession of one of

these eight-acre allotments which it was proposed to set up should be allowed to dispose of it, in any way other than through the regular descent from father to eldest son by the chief wife, without the previous knowledge and consent of the Government. Without such a clause, Rhodes' keen foresight told him, unscrupulous white men would quickly overreach and cozen the natives out of their land, and by so doing speedily gain control of large tracts of country—a very undesirable state of things, and one which would totally defeat the objects for which the bill was framed.

It was also provided that the native allotments should not be sublet, but that, in case any native declined to cultivate or take any interest in his land, the Government had the right to resume possession of it and reallot as seemed best to them. Among other things, the Act provided for the establishment of a labour bureau, where the natives should register themselves in order to be provided with work. If they failed to do this, and could not show that they were in settled employment obtained in other ways, they would have to pay the labour tax of 10s. before referred to.

Rhodes wound up this sterling speech, in some respects the most interesting and important that he has delivered in the whole course of his public career, with the following striking phrase: "The natives are children, and we ought to do something for the minds and the brains that the Almighty has given them. I do not believe that they are different from ourselves." There, in one sentence, is the standpoint from which Rhodes views the Native question of South Africa, and it is to be imagined that there are few

who differ from him among those who have studied carefully this complex question.

Though Rhodes' transparent honesty of purpose in regard to this question is manifest to all whose eyes are not blinded by prejudice, yet on more than one occasion he has been charged with hypocrisy, and plainly told that his sole object in endeavouring to inculcate the doctrine of the dignity of labour into the minds of the South African natives was to provide a plentiful supply of black workmen for the gold and diamond mines of South Africa. It is hopeless to argue with such people. I content myself therefore with stating Rhodes' actions, and leaving the public, weighing the matter carefully, to draw their own conclusions.

In the end, of course, Rhodes carried his bill, though he had to fight some very strong antagonism before he triumphed. Triumph, however, he did in the end : that is Cecil Rhodes' way. When he has set his mind on the attainment of any object he achieves his purpose sooner or later.

In his dealings with the large native population of Rhodesia, Rhodes has followed much the same lines which he found to work so successfully in Cape Colony ; but it has been beyond even his powers to make the vast majority of the natives under the rule of the British South Africa Company settle down to work, especially in the mines. The Matabele and neighbouring tribes view with positive horror and superstitious awe the notion of spending their days working deep down in a gold mine, some distance away from even the tiniest ray of daylight. Even the smallest and most insignificant noise in one of these mines echoes and reverberates in strange

fashion ; and while a white man takes absolutely no notice of such a thing, the ignorant natives, mere grown-up babies when it comes to a matter of nerves, turn nearly green with fright, and the slightest thing will send them stampeding to the foot of the shaft terror-stricken and clamouring to be set on the face of the earth in the bright sunshine once more.

It is impossible to do otherwise than sympathise with the natives in this matter ; nevertheless, it is a constant menace to the safety and security of the white dwellers in Rhodesia that there should be in their midst a large, able-bodied native population living in absolute idleness. The old maxim, that

“Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do,”

is perhaps even more than usually true when applied to the native races of South Africa. The Aborigines Protection Society and the sentimental school will most likely hold up their hands in pious horror at the statement ; but I have no hesitation in saying that the Rhodesian natives, as much for their own good as for that of the white colonists, should be compelled to take up settled labour of some kind or another. It is to be hoped that at some period in the very near future Mr Rhodes will resolutely wrestle with this problem until he has succeeded in evolving some way of rendering labour compulsory among the natives of that great country to which he has given his name. I am as much opposed as any one to the natives being compelled to work in the mines, for that is a form of employment for which they are unfitted by nature ; but it ought not to be hard to find some form of work that shall be congenial to them.

In addition to the occasions on which Rhodes has been brought prominently into connection with the Native question of South Africa to which allusions have already been made in these pages, there was one other in which he was called upon to address the Cape House of Assembly concerning his views on this subject. That was at the time of the annexation of Pondoland by Cape Colony in 1894. Pondoland is a tract of country containing a large native population, which acted as a sort of "buffer state" between the two British colonies of the Cape and Natal. The natives in this country were always at war among themselves, until at length Cape Colony intervened to restore order. To put an end to the bloodshed and rapine which had so long prevailed, it was decided, after much correspondence between the Imperial Government and the Colonial Governments of Natal and Cape Colony, that the latter state should take over the administration of Pondoland, and it fell to the lot of Mr Rhodes to move the annexation of Pondoland in the Cape House of Assembly. In doing so he fully explained the reasons that had led to the proposal.

He was reproached in more than one quarter for permitting the natives to retain their guns, just as he had been reproached some years previously when he followed out a similar policy in Basutoland. In defending his action in this matter he said that he found it difficult to discover any justification for disarming the natives. They had submitted quietly to the occupation of their country by Major Elliott and the column of Cape Mounted Police which had been sent from Cape Town into Pondoland, and Rhodes did not think that under those circumstances the

Cape Government would have had the slightest excuse for demanding the surrender of their guns, especially as, he was careful to point out, the guns were wretched weapons and about as harmless as guns well can be. If the natives had been compensated with money—as they must have been had the surrender of the guns been insisted upon—they would in all probability have spent such money in buying more modern weapons.

There will be many who disagree *in toto* with Mr Rhodes on this question. It seems only reasonable to suppose that if he and the British South Africa Company had insisted on the Matabele delivering up their guns at the conclusion of the first war in that country, we should have been spared many of the horrors which accompanied the Matabele rebellion of 1896-97. However, this policy of permitting the natives to retain possession of their guns acted very well in Basutoland, and later events showed that it acted equally well in Pondoland; so that Rhodes is hardly to be blamed because his policy failed when tried in connection with the Matabele. It shows, however, that it is not always wise to employ the same policy when dealing with different tribes of South African natives, and that even Rhodes, with his great knowledge of the natives and their ways, was in error when he first came into contact with the warlike Matabele, otherwise he would have made the handing in of every gun possessed by the followers of Lobengula an imperative condition before he permitted the white columns to be disbanded.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RAID AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

I HAVE already described in detail the causes which led Mr Rhodes to identify himself with the Reform movement at Johannesburg, and the course of events which ultimately led up to the unfortunate Jameson Raid; so that there is no need for me to repeat myself here, save so far as to insist upon the difference between the conditions which Rhodes had decided would justify him in moving the Rhodesian police force across the frontier into the Transvaal to restore order in Johannesburg and to stand between the Uitlander population of the Rand and the wrath of President Kruger, and the conditions under which Jameson's foolhardy and criminal enterprise was entered upon—conditions which it was next to impossible for Rhodes to foresee and absolutely impossible for him to prevent. Having done this, it only remains for me to describe events as they concerned Mr Rhodes during the march of Dr Jameson and his men, and directly after the failure of the Raid and up to and during the sittings of the Committees which were appointed to go into the whole affair in Cape Town and in London.

The first intimation to reach Cape Town—where

Rhodes was in residence at the time—that Jameson had crossed the border and was marching towards Johannesburg came about nine o'clock on the morning of Sunday, December 29, 1895, when the telegraph office in that city was opened, and the operators found two telegrams from Dr Jameson to Mr Rhodes in a private cipher. One of these had been despatched on the evening of the 28th, the other early on the following morning. A messenger from the British South Africa Company called at the telegraph office in the usual course during the morning, and the two messages were handed to him and conveyed at once to Mr Stevens, the manager of the Cape Town branch of the Chartered Company, who enjoyed a large measure of Mr Rhodes' confidence. This gentleman at once proceeded to decode the telegrams, little dreaming what they were to reveal. Naturally he dealt with the earlier one first. It ran, "Unless I hear definitely to the contrary, shall leave to-morrow evening." The second one was as follows: "Shall leave to-night for Transvaal." Mr Stevens gazed at the flimsy pieces of paper in front of him in amazement, and after another hurried glance at the code to see that there was no possibility of error in the deciphering of the messages, at once dashed off as fast as a cab could convey him to find Mr Rhodes at Groot Schuur.

At this time Mr Rhodes was entertaining a party at his house, which included among others Mr Charles Leonard, one of the leaders of the Reform movement in Johannesburg, and they were at luncheon when Mr Stevens arrived. So soon as the fateful telegrams were laid before Rhodes, and he realised to the full their significance, urgent messages were sent off to the post-offices to "keep Mafeking open," as Mr Rhodes

would shortly have a very important telegram to send up. The operators, accordingly, tried to get into communication with the frontier town. But in vain. The wires were cut. Dr Jameson had burned his boats behind him.

The message Rhodes was endeavouring unsuccessfully to get through was couched as follows : "Things in Johannesburg I yet hope to see amicably settled. . . . On no account whatever must you move. I most strongly object to such a course." This telegram was handed in at the Cape Town telegraph office at twelve noon on December 29, but, as has been said, it was impossible to transmit it.

When he had despatched his telegram, and had been told that it could not be forwarded, Rhodes paced the floor of the library at Groot Schuur like a caged lion, and seemed totally unable to collect his scattered wits. All he could do was to run his fingers nervously through his hair, and murmur distractedly to himself, "Now just be cool. Now just be cool. Let us think this thing out." It is not too much to say that for a brief period the receipt of Jameson's two abrupt messages absolutely deranged Rhodes' mental capacity, and his mind vacillated in what was for him a very strange fashion. He was confronted with a problem such as a man is rarely called upon to grapple with, and for a time he groped in the dark, as it were, vainly feeling for some object that he might lay hold of to enable him to rally his faculties. At the first rush of these conflicting emotions there was on the part of Rhodes an impulse to blame Jameson for breaking away as he had done without any previous warning ; but to this succeeded a great confidence in his old friend, and an optimistic belief that he and his

men would get through to Johannesburg all right, and that things would not turn out to be so bad as they threatened.

As soon as he was able to think coherently Rhodes set himself down to fight with the complex problem in front of him in thoroughly characteristic fashion. As the day wore on strange rumours of what was transpiring in the Transvaal began to run through Cape Town and soon reached those in authority, though those who were in the confidence of Cecil Rhodes closed their lips tightly and suffered no word to escape them concerning the serious crisis which had arisen. In the evening some of these rumours reached the ears of Mr Rhodes' parliamentary ally and near neighbour at Groot Schuur, the Hon. W. P. Schreiner, who at once set off across the grounds which separated his house from that of Mr Rhodes to ascertain what was really going forward, and what part Rhodes was playing in the drama.

Schreiner was only able to see Rhodes for a few minutes. "Have you seen Charles Leonard?" he asked the Cape Premier when he found that the latter was resolutely silent as to what was going forward. "Yes," was Rhodes' reply in a tone of studied indifference, "I have seen him." Then as Schreiner took his leave he said to Rhodes in a tone of great earnestness, "For goodness' sake keep yourself clear from that entanglement in Johannesburg" (meaning the growing agitation of the Reform Committee), "for if there is any disturbance there they are sure to try and drag you into it."

In reply to this Rhodes merely shrugged his shoulders with an assumption of indifference which in reality he must have been far from feeling, and said,

“ Oh, that is all right. Good night,” and so the two men parted. Mr Schreiner does not seem at this period to have had the least suspicion of the real gravity of the case, or that Jameson had actually invaded the Transvaal. Indeed, who that had not seen the telegrams would have imagined that things had gone so far? But he was obviously actuated with a sincere desire to serve Rhodes and to protect him, if possible, from the follies of others, and possibly from those of himself, and it was none of Mr Schreiner’s fault that he was unable to be of any assistance to his parliamentary chief and old personal friend.

On the Monday morning, December 30, the news of Jameson’s march was known all over Cape Town, and the newspaper offices were besieged by crowds anxious to have confirmation of this and to learn further details. So soon as the High Commissioner at the Cape, Sir Hercules Robinson, was apprised of events, he instructed the Imperial Secretary, Sir Graham Bowyer, to call on Rhodes, and to see how far the latter was implicated. Rhodes, however, was not to be found at any of his offices in Cape Town, or at the British South Africa Company, or at the De Beers Company ; while the attendants at the House of Assembly informed Sir Graham Bowyer that the Premier had not been there that day. After these ineffectual efforts to find his man, Sir Graham was forced to have recourse to pen and ink, and forwarded a letter to Groot Schuur, couched in terms of great coolness and formality, in which the following was the principal sentence :—

“ I have called several times at your offices this morning for the purpose of conveying to you his Excellency’s instructions for the immediate recall of

Dr Jameson, but you have not, so far as is known, been at any of the public offices, or at the offices of the British South Africa Company. I therefore send this note by special messenger to your private address."

When this missive reached Groot Schuur Rhodes was not at home. Early that morning—soon after dawn, in fact—he had left the house on his favourite pony and ridden off in the direction of the lower slopes of Table Mountain, and there he passed the day, taking neither food nor drink, communing in solitude with the forces of nature as set out around him, and endeavouring to find some way out of the *impasse* into which his interference in the affairs of an alien state, no less than the recklessness of his lieutenant, had landed him. It is impossible to refrain from apportioning grave blame to Dr Jameson for taking the step he did without the prior knowledge and consent of Rhodes; but it has always to be borne in mind that if Rhodes had not placed the power to do mischief in Jameson's grasp it would have been impossible for the latter to have done the harm he did.

Receiving no reply to his letter, Sir Graham Bowyer sent another note to Rhodes on the matter, and these two letters were handed Rhodes when he returned from his ride in the evening. Glancing over them almost mechanically, Rhodes sighed wearily and then turned on his heel and entered his library to indite the following abrupt reply, which he forwarded undated to the Imperial Secretary:—

"MY DEAR BOWYER,—Jameson has gone in without my authority. I hope our message may have stopped him. Very sorry to have missed you.—Yours,

"C. J. RHODES."

There is in this brief epistle a slight discrepancy to be noted, to which Sir William Harcourt among others afterwards called attention during the sittings of the Parliamentary Committee. As has previously been said, Rhodes was informed that the wires to Mafeking were cut on the Sunday afternoon. This being so, how does it come that on the Monday evening he writes to Sir Graham Bowyer saying that he hopes the messages stopping Jameson have got through? To this there are two explanations which suggest themselves, though possibly neither is quite satisfactory. In the first place, Rhodes at this time had no means of knowing that Dr Jameson had deliberately severed the telegraph-wires to prevent any messages recalling him getting through, and he may have supposed that the interruption was merely due to local and easily remediable causes. Telegraph-wires in South Africa are frequently "down" for a few hours, and then restarted in full working order once more. In the second place, the tumult in Rhodes' mind had not yet had time to subside, so that he may be forgiven if some of the details of all that had transpired during the twenty-four hours immediately preceding the writing of this letter had escaped him.

On the Monday afternoon Mr W. Schreiner again called at Groot Schuur to see Mr Rhodes, but the latter had not returned, so he left an urgent request that Rhodes would see him in the evening. Complying with this request after he had had supper, Mr Rhodes sent his body-servant over to Mr Schreiner's house to tell him he would see him if he would come round. Mr Schreiner did so, and on his arrival was shocked to see what a change the twenty-four hours had produced in Rhodes. His face was pale and

haggard. There was a light of fever in his eyes, and the dark rings beneath them told of the severity of the mental struggle through which he had so lately passed, while his hair was perceptibly more tinged with grey than it had hitherto been.

For three hours or more Rhodes and Schreiner sat closeted together in the cosy, teak-lined library at Groot Schuur. Here, among other things, the pros and cons for Rhodes' resignation of his position as Prime Minister of Cape Colony were discussed. Mr Schreiner's position was very difficult. On the one hand the whole of his Afrikander sympathies were with the Transvaal and bitterly opposed to Jameson; and on the other hand was his long-standing friendship with Rhodes, and the strong effect which the personality of the great figure of South African politics had upon him made him strive against his better judgment to find some excuse for him.

At the end of the protracted interview it was determined that Rhodes should place his resignation of the premiership in the hands of Sir Hercules Robinson the next morning, to be forwarded to the Colonial Secretary in London. This, as a matter of fact, he did; but both Mr Chamberlain and Sir Hercules Robinson declined to accept it so long as there was any possibility of him being able to use his official position to recall Dr Jameson. When it was seen that this possibility no longer existed, and it became known that the Boer Commandant Cronje had compelled Jameson and his followers to lay down their arms and surrender themselves prisoners at Doornkop, this resignation was at once accepted, and an emergency Ministry hastily formed with Sir Gordon Sprigg as Premier.

It was of course obvious to all who had followed

events closely and had managed to keep their heads sufficiently clear to see the course which they would inevitably take, that Sir Hercules Robinson must instantly vindicate the position of the British Empire in the business, and by outlawing Jameson and those who had followed him, disclaim any further responsibility for his actions, or any concern as to what happened to him.

Despite the tremendous excitement of the time, Sir Hercules Robinson maintained his presence of mind remarkably well, and when he learned from Sir Graham Bowyer that it was impossible to reach Rhodes either personally or by letter, he despatched an urgent message, so soon as the telegraph-wires were reopened, to Mr F. J. Newton, the resident commissioner in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, ordering him to do all that lay in his power to prevent Jameson's farther progress, and to ensure his immediate return to British territory. It is only due to Mr Newton to say that he loyally endeavoured to carry out these instructions, despatching a messenger on the fleetest horse that he could lay his hands on. What the result of this message of recall was will be seen later.

It did not seem to occur to Rhodes at first that Jameson and his men were liable to be proclaimed outlaws through their act, and that the British Government, for its own credit's sake, would be compelled to refrain from affording them any assistance or protection ; but as soon as he realised this he made desperate efforts to induce the High Commissioner to withhold his proclamation so long as there seemed a chance of Jameson getting into Johannesburg in safety. Fortunately, however, for the honour of the Empire, Sir Hercules Robinson declined to postpone

his official repudiation of Jameson and his actions, which was therefore issued on December 31. Indeed, the conduct of Sir Hercules Robinson all through was the one commendable thing in an otherwise sordid business. This proclamation called upon all British subjects to abstain from aiding or abetting Dr Jameson and those with him in their armed violation of the territory of a friendly state.

In addition to the messenger which, as before-mentioned, Sir Hercules Robinson ordered Mr Newton to send after Jameson from Mafeking, another was despatched from Pretoria to intercept the raiders, and to deliver imperative orders for their immediate return to British soil, and their surrender to the authorities as soon as they arrived there. The man from Mafeking caught Jameson up on the night of December 31, two days, be it remembered, before the collision with the Boers under Cronje took place, and handed the order to Dr Jameson, while the one from Pretoria handed in another message, couched in almost identical terms with the first, between ten and eleven o'clock in the forenoon of January 1. Both these messages Jameson treated with contempt, and point-blank refused to obey. He had been, as he stated, summoned by a letter from the principal residents of the Rand "to come to their assistance in their extremity," and this, despite all remonstrances and orders to the contrary, he intended to do.

This, of course, was a reference to the notorious "women and children" letter, of which more will be said at a later stage; and, while desiring to treat Dr Jameson with justice, and even with leniency, in his act of madness, it must be pointed out that at the time he returned this answer to the orders of the

High Commissioner he was perfectly aware of the circumstances under which this letter had been obtained, and the length of time that had elapsed since it was penned and handed to him for employment when the proper time arose.

Speaking with one of Jameson's followers, during the time that the Parliamentary Committee was sitting, respecting these messages of Sir Hercules Robinson, and the answer that Jameson returned to them, I was given rather a surprising explanation of the affair, which I append here, neither accepting it nor scouting it, but setting it down as nearly as I can remember in the man's own words. "You see," he said, "all we men were led to believe that the High Commissioner knew all that was going on, and I am convinced that Dr Jim thought the same. Therefore, when these letters came in, we all, from Jameson and Willoughby downwards, regarded them as mere 'bluff,' done for the purpose of saving Sir Hercules Robinson and the Colonial Office in the eyes of the foreign nations. We thought that the High Commissioner was then moving up with all speed to Pretoria to tackle Kruger, and that the letters were sent to us as a blind, and were never intended to be acted upon. If I had thought otherwise, I for one should have declined to go any farther, and have at once returned to Pitsani."

Possibly there is something in this, and the rank and file of the raiders did actually believe it; but it is difficult to accept the view that Jameson and his officers were not better informed, or did not know Sir Hercules Robinson better than to suppose that he could act such a double part as that outlined above. This statement further throws considerable light on

the low code of political morals which seems to have pervaded all classes in South Africa at this time.

For some days after he was first informed of the Raid, Rhodes absolutely declined to move a finger to arrest the march of Jameson, or to repudiate him and his actions in any shape or form. Many pressing letters were sent him by the Colonial Secretary, through Sir Hercules Robinson, calling upon him to dissociate himself publicly from the Raid, and his friends urged him most strongly to take the same course—but he was adamant; neither the commands of the High Commissioner nor the pleadings of those around him could induce Rhodes to cast off his friend and lieutenant, though the latter had, to all appearances, ruined him completely as a public man.

On January 1, however, he so far modified his stubborn attitude as to consent, at the behest of the High Commissioner, to telegraph to Colonel Spreckley at Bulawayo, telling him that on no account was he to move the volunteer force in that town (which was known as the Rhodesia Horse) toward the Transvaal border, or to make any other attempt to assist Jameson. Shortly after this message had been despatched news began to reach Cape Town of a large Boer force being massed, under the fire-eating Commandant Cronje, to oppose the raiders, and on January 2 it was rumoured that Jameson was fighting his way into Johannesburg and sweeping all opposition on one side. Cape Town then became in a perfect ferment, and the excitement, which had been daily growing since Jameson first entered the Transvaal, now reached fever-heat, and huge crowds collected in the streets awaiting further news. These

crowds, carried away as they were by the passions of the moment, did not pause to consider the rights and wrongs of the question ; indeed it is doubtful whether one person out of every ten understood them. All they knew or cared about was that a British force was engaged in fighting against vastly superior numbers of Boers, and this appealed to them very forcibly.

The sentiment of these crowds was aggressively pro-British, and on all sides were heard optimistic prophecies to the effect that Jameson was "bound to come out on top," and would reach the "gold-reef city" without much delay. What he would do when he got there no one had the least idea, or took the trouble to ask ; for that was a detail which did not concern the crowd in the least, though an assault on Pretoria was confidently predicted. When at length it was announced that Jameson had been outwitted and defeated by the wily Cronje, and compelled to surrender with the whole of his force after suffering severe loss, there was a scene of general stupefaction. At first this statement was absolutely scouted as wildly impossible ; but when the message was confirmed, and there was no longer any possibility of doubt, Cape Town almost to a man turned on the Uitlander population of Johannesburg, and reviled them as a set of miserable cowards who had sat still and allowed Jameson and his men to be taken prisoners almost before their eyes, without making the least effort to render him any assistance.

Such a view was manifestly unjust, and Rhodes was almost alone in recognising this when told what the popular feeling towards the Uitlanders was. In reply he shrugged his shoulders contemptuously, and said, "The Uitlanders were no cowards ; they

were rushed." This is without doubt the true version of the affair. By means of that "bluff" at which he was such an adept, Mr Kruger had overawed the raw, untrained reformers of Johannesburg, and compelled them to remain quiet ; while the threat of outlawry which the High Commissioner had launched at the heads of those who made the slightest effort to assist Jameson also had a restraining influence. Men of the stamp of Colonel Frank Rhodes are not cowards ; but they can see when to strike a blow, and when it is better to hold their hands.

As events have since proved, the best thing that could have happened was that Dr Jameson should have been defeated and taken prisoner, and none now probably realise this more clearly than does Dr Jameson himself. It was the best thing that could have happened for all concerned that the raiders were defeated. There is no doubt about it that if the battle had gone the other way and the Boers had been repulsed, war must have ensued between the Transvaal and Great Britain, and Germany would have actively intervened in support of the Transvaal, with the result that a very grave crisis would have arisen besides which what really did occur was a mere drop in the ocean.

The news that Jameson was taken prisoner, and that he and his fellow-officers had been sentenced to death by the Transvaal president, acted as a crowning blow to Rhodes. Not that he for a moment believed that Kruger would dare to carry his threat into execution. He knew that this was only a characteristic piece of bounce on the part of the Transvaal president ; but with this inglorious termination to an inglorious affair, his career as a public man in South

Africa appeared to be completely at an end. It was said openly in Cape Town that Cecil Rhodes would henceforward be but a memory and nothing more, and that he could never by any chance play a prominent part again in the politics of the sub-continent. Such, indeed, seemed to be the only conclusion that it was possible to arrive at.

In the hour of his deep tribulation Rhodes turned his thoughts towards the town which had seen him come to the front in politics, and decided to return without delay to Kimberley. It is a striking fact that whenever any crisis has arisen in Rhodes' life it has always been to the "city of diamonds" that he has turned for solace and sympathy; and, let it be added, he has never done so in vain. In Kimberley, at any rate, Rhodes is not only appreciated but looked up to almost as a demigod by the whole population. It was his earnest desire that his removal from Cape Town to the north should be kept as secret as possible, but this was not to be, for at every station through which his train had to pass large crowds gathered and cheered him to the echo, while on several occasions he was compelled to make short speeches on the situation.

Rhodes has often been taunted by his enemies for his want of good taste in thus submitting to be feted at the time when the responsibility for the Raid sat so heavily on his shoulders, but had he had his way he would, as all who really know the man will admit, far rather have been permitted for a time to pass into complete oblivion. His fellow-colonists would not for a moment permit this, however. They recognised that he had made a grave blunder, to put the matter no more strongly, in so prominently

identifying himself with the revolutionary movement in Johannesburg; but they further recognised that he was the one man that South Africa needed for its future prosperity, and they were determined that his services should not be lost to them if they could prevent it. Mr Labouchere was, of course, greatly shocked at the whole proceedings; but that gentleman's opinions are of no interest or value to any one beyond himself. It is worthy of mention that during this journey, and again later, when he returned from Kimberley to Cape Town, preparatory to sailing for England, Mr Rhodes received his warmest and most hearty greetings in the Dutch strongholds of Cape Colony through which he passed. And yet there are to-day ignorant persons who will tell us that Mr Rhodes is, and always has been, cordially hated by the Cape Dutch!

In the speeches he was compelled to make, Rhodes gave evidence of the fact that the warm support he had received from his fellow-colonists was already having a revivifying effect upon him; and in one of them he declared, with a touch of his old breeziness and ardour of manner which was very gratifying to his supporters to observe, that "though his friends had told him that his political life at the Cape was at an end, and that he would never again be able to enter public life, he himself was of the opinion that instead of his career being terminated it was, in reality, only just beginning.

He had, however, two very trying ordeals still to face. The Cape Government was already making preparations for holding a searching inquiry into the circumstances leading up to the Raid, with the object of clearing itself from any complicity in the

matter ; and it was daily becoming increasingly clear that the Imperial Government would be compelled to adopt a similar course to vindicate its own position in the eyes of the world. Rhodes perceived that it was imperative that he should appear before both of these bodies and give evidence, and it was easy for him to see that he would have to undergo a severe cross-questioning as to his connection with the affair. As he remarked, however, in an expressive phrase, he was quite prepared to "face the music," and to take his castigation like a man.

With a view to seeing how matters really stood in England, and how the British South Africa Company would be affected by the abuse of the powers intrusted to it under the charter, he sailed from South Africa for England in January 1896.

CHAPTER XVII.

RHODES BEFORE THE RAID COMMITTEE.

ON his arrival in England in the spring of 1896 Mr Rhodes immediately placed himself in communication with the Colonial Office regarding the future government of Rhodesia, and the modifications which, it was obvious, the Government, on account of the Raid, would be compelled to make in the original charter. On February 6 he had a most momentous interview with Mr Chamberlain on this subject. The first point on which he addressed himself to the Colonial Secretary was regarding the attitude of the Government towards the entire revocation of the charter, and the future administration of Rhodesia as a Crown colony, as was at this time being so largely advocated by certain sections of public opinion in England.

Mr Rhodes was relieved to find that such a step did not meet with the approval of the Cabinet. There was a heavy annual deficit at this time in the cost of the administration of Rhodesia, and her Majesty's Government was not in the least anxious to saddle the British taxpayer with this. Mr Rhodes, however, unreservedly placed the question of the future control of the police of Rhodesia in the

hands of Mr Chamberlain, and indeed offered to raise no opposition to this force—in addition to any other of a military or semi-military character which might at any future time be formed in the country —being placed under the direct control of the Imperial Government, the Chartered Company, of course, still continuing to provide the money for their maintenance. Possibly this was only making a virtue of a necessity, for it was an open secret that the Government contemplated taking this highly desirable step; but it is at least worthy of being placed on record that it was Mr Rhodes who first made a definite proposal to this end.

He urged, however, with great earnestness, that it should still be left to the British South Africa Company, as heretofore, to appoint the magisterial, judicial, and civil officials of Rhodesia. To this Mr Chamberlain assented, subject, of course, to the right of the final sanction for the appointment of any such official remaining in the hands of the Colonial Office. It was only fair that such an arrangement should have been come to; for as every one of these officials had to be paid out of the funds of the company, and as the company was naturally in a far better position to judge of the fitness of an individual for a particular post than the authorities in Downing Street could possibly be, it would have been manifestly unfair, and indeed rather absurd, for the Imperial Government to have claimed the right to nominate and appoint these officers.

Mr Chamberlain, in assenting to the appointment of these officials remaining on the same basis as formerly, was careful to point out, with his customary directness of speech, that in future it would be an

Imperial officer who would have the command of the military and police forces in Rhodesia, and would be the "border authority," so that the power of the company, or of any of its members, to make another armed incursion into alien territory would no longer exist.

The next question to which Mr Rhodes devoted himself was that of the proposed establishment of a British Resident in Rhodesia, with duties and powers similar in a great measure to those enjoyed by British Residents at some of the courts of the semi-independent states of India. Mr Rhodes bluntly declared that there was no necessity whatever for such a step. As he pointed out, the High Commissioner at the Cape had always had, under the terms of the charter, the power to sanction, revise, annul, or veto any law or regulation that the company might formulate for the government of Rhodesia and its settlers and native inhabitants. Mr Chamberlain turned this over in his mind for a minute or two, and then agreed that the necessity for the appointment of such a Resident did not in reality exist.

Coming by degrees to more debatable ground, Mr Rhodes urged with all the powers at his command that there might be no need for the proposed parliamentary inquiry into the circumstances under which Dr Jameson's Raid took place, especially having regard to the fact that it had already been determined that that gentleman and his fellow-officers should be tried at the bar for their violations of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and that in all probability sufficient light would be shed on the whole affair at this trial, so that a Parliamentary Committee would be rather in the nature of a redundancy.

Here the Colonial Secretary found himself in a quandary. For his own part, and speaking quite unofficially, he admitted that he could not see any real need for such a committee, but, as he told Mr Rhodes, he was bound to act in accordance with the wishes of the House of Commons in this matter. If they desired, as seemed probable, that a separate inquiry into the Raid by a committee appointed by themselves should be held, then he could not oppose such a desire, for fear that his action in so doing would be misinterpreted. Mr Chamberlain was strengthened in this view by the fact that several insinuations had been made to the effect that the Colonial Office was implicated in the Raid, and knew all about it long before it took place. He was willing, however, to meet the company on this subject so far as to invite it to consider whether a statutory commission or a Parliamentary Committee would be preferable from its point of view. If a man has to be hanged, it is some consolation to be allowed to choose his own executioner. After some minor details had been discussed the interview terminated.

On the following day, February 7, Mr Rhodes attended a meeting of the directors of the British South Africa Company, and briefly recounted what had passed between the Colonial Secretary and himself; and on the next day he sailed for the Cape once more, as he found there was little or nothing to be done in England until the House of Commons had determined whether it would hold this inquiry into the Raid. He was led to return to South Africa at this juncture by reason also of the fact that there were already signs of coming trouble with the natives in Rhodesia.

Soon after he arrived in South Africa the rebellion

of the Matabele blazed out in earnest, and Rhodes found his hands full in coping with this new crisis. Incidentally this sudden rising of the native population of Rhodesia had a beneficial effect on Rhodes, inasmuch as it served to withdraw his thoughts from his own personal troubles, and to prevent him from brooding over the storm-clouds which were then collecting over his head and threatening to burst at any moment. For the present, however, the events of the Matabele rebellion and the part Rhodes played in the quelling of the insurrection must be left on one side, to be dealt with in detail in the succeeding chapter ; and I will now pass on to the proceedings of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which was appointed to inquire into the origin and circumstances of the Jameson Raid and also to go into the question of the administration of Rhodesia, and to report to the House what alterations, if any, were desirable in the charter and the privileges granted to the British South Africa Company.



It was on January 27, 1897, that a committee was appointed, and the following gentlemen were selected to serve on it : Sir Richard Webster (at that time the Attorney-General, and now Lord Alverstone, the Lord Chief-Justice of England), Mr Bigham, Mr Blake, Mr Sydney Buxton, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr Chamberlain, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr Cripps, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr John Ellis, Sir William Harcourt, Mr W. L. Jackson, Mr Labouchere, Mr Wharton, and Mr George Wyndham. The first meeting of the Committee took place on February 5, when Mr Jackson was elected chairman and the preliminaries of the future proceedings were arranged. Among other things, leave for the British South

Africa Company, Mr Rhodes, Dr Jameson, Mr Alfred Beit, Mr Lionel Phillips, and Dr Rutherford Harris to be represented before the committee by counsel was granted.

Here, perhaps, it is necessary to halt a little to recall briefly what had occurred between the time that Rhodes had returned to the Cape in February 1896 and the date of the first sitting of the committee. It was clear to all, as soon as the Raid happened, that it would be absolutely necessary for Mr Rhodes to resign his position as the managing director of the British South Africa Company; and when events so shaped themselves as to show that Mr Beit was almost as much implicated in the affair as Rhodes himself, it was equally clear that he too would have to resign his position as a member of the board of directors. During the last year or two, when the whole question of the Raid has been reopened by reason of the war in South Africa, it has been many times stated by those who uphold the Boer cause that Messrs Rhodes and Beit only retired from the British South Africa Company when pressure was brought to bear upon them by the Colonial Office, and it was seen that if they did not so retire the charter was in danger of being withdrawn. As a matter of fact this is quite incorrect, as I think I shall be able to demonstrate in a very few lines.

The whole contention of those who believe that the two gentlemen in question only quitted the board of the British South Africa Company on being called upon to do so by the Colonial Office is based upon a letter from Mr Fairfield, one of Mr Chamberlain's lieutenants at the Colonial Office, and now deceased, to Mr Hawkesley, the solicitor to the Chartered

Company and also to Mr Rhodes, dated May 7, 1896. In this letter Mr Fairfield clearly hinted that it would be better if Mr Rhodes and Mr Beit immediately proffered their resignations to their fellow-directors; but I think a perusal of this letter will make it quite obvious that in saying this the writer was in no sense speaking officially on behalf of the Colonial Office.

It was not until six or seven weeks after this that the resignations of Messrs Rhodes and Beit were offered to the board of the Chartered Company, this step being taken on June 26, to be precise. Of course they were at once accepted. At this time there was absolutely no pressure whatever being exercised by the Colonial Office on this matter, and when on the evening of this day Mr Chamberlain was unofficially informed of the resignations, he immediately remarked that the question of Messrs Rhodes and Beit resigning their seats on the Chartered Company was one which concerned themselves and the company alone, and that the Colonial Office was not interested in the matter in the least. He gave it as his personal opinion, however, that had he been in the same position as these two gentlemen found themselves in, he would have adopted precisely the same line of conduct. This should show quite clearly that the secession of Mr Rhodes and Mr Beit from the Chartered Company was entirely voluntary on their part, and that there is not the least foundation in fact for the oft-repeated statement that the step in question was only taken at the express command of the Colonial Office.

Dr Jameson, who in July 1896 had been sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment for the part he played in the Raid, had been released in the December of that

year, owing to the very serious condition of his health, so that he was quite free to appear as a witness before the Committee.

It was obvious that Mr Rhodes would be the principal witness to appear before the Committee, especially as he had taken the whole blame for the affair upon his own shoulders, and therefore it was not surprising that he should be called upon as one of the first to give evidence. His appearance before the Committee was awaited with great interest by the general public, and when at length, on February 16, he took his seat in the chair which served the purpose of a witness-box in the hastily equipped committee-room in Westminster Hall, his attitude produced totally different effects on those who have placed their impressions of the scene on paper.

By some he is described as having been petulant and overbearing in his manner towards the Committee, while a few writers, whose judgment was probably warped by the bias of their political views, have gone so far as to describe him as underbred, and even at times offensive. This is, of course, absurd. Whatever Mr Rhodes' faults may be,—and it would be flattery of a very gross description to deny that he has faults in abundance,—Mr Rhodes is at least a gentleman, and it would be as impossible for him to be underbred and offensive as it would be for him to be a pickpocket or a garroter.

Other, and more sane, critics have described him as appearing to be perfectly calm, dignified, collected, and even statesmanlike in his bearing. As a matter of fact, I should hesitate to accept either of these views. Petulant and overbearing he most decidedly was not, or at any rate he did not strike me as being

so, though I observed his actions and his words very narrowly ; but, on the other hand, he was by no means cool and collected, especially on the first day. In fact, as he read the statement concerning his connection with the Raid which he had drawn up, and had sought the permission of the Committee to read as “covering practically his whole case,” he was distinctly nervous and halting in his manner ; but as the days wore on and he became accustomed to his surroundings he grew more and more at his ease, until when, near the conclusion of his lengthy cross-examination, Mr Labouchere proceeded to question him, the member for Northampton found that he had as steady and as clear an intellect as his own to deal with, and in the end was compelled to beat a hasty and somewhat undignified retreat.

The statement which Mr Rhodes presented to the Committee as showing his position with regard to the Raid was of so important a character that I cannot do better than give it here *in extenso*. He said :—

“ From the date of the establishment of the gold industry on a large scale at Johannesburg much discontent has been caused by the restrictions and impositions placed upon it by the Transvaal Government, by the corrupt administration of that Government, and by the denial of civil rights to the rapidly growing Uitlander population. This discontent has gradually but steadily increased, and a considerable time ago I learnt from my intercourse with many of the leading persons in Johannesburg that the position of affairs there had become intolerable. After long efforts they despaired of obtaining redress by constitutional means, and were resolved to seek by extra-constitutional means such a change in the Government

of the South African Republic as should give to the majority of the population, possessing more than half the land, nine-tenths of the wealth, and paying nineteen-twentieths of the taxes in the country, a due share in its administration.

“I sympathised with, and as one largely interested in the Transvaal shared in, these grievances; and, further, as a citizen of the Cape Colony I felt that the persistently unfriendly attitude of the Government of the South African Republic towards the colony was the great obstacle to common action for practical purposes among the various states of South Africa. Under these circumstances I assisted the movement in Johannesburg with my purse and influence. Further, acting within my rights, in the autumn of 1895 I placed on territory under the administration of the British South Africa Company, upon the borders of the Transvaal, a body of troops under Dr Jameson, prepared to act in the Transvaal in certain eventualities. I did not communicate these views to the board of directors of the British South Africa Company.

“With reference to the Jameson Raid, I may state that Dr Jameson went in without my authority. Having said this, I desire to add that I am willing, generally, to accept the finding as to facts contained in the report of the Committee of the Cape Parliament. I must admit that in all my actions I was greatly influenced by my belief that the policy of the present Government of the South African Republic was to introduce the influence of another foreign power into the already complicated system of South Africa, and thereby render more difficult in the future the closer union of the different states.”

Having read the above statement, Mr Rhodes then prepared himself for the severe ordeal of the cross-examination. Sir William Harcourt was the first to take Mr Rhodes in hand. At the commencement he confined himself to endeavouring to find out from Mr Rhodes exactly how far the latter had applied the funds of the British South Africa Company to financing the Reform Committee in Johannesburg. As Mr Rhodes was able to show, while it was undeniable that he had drawn cheques on the company for this purpose, yet the company was often in his debt to a considerable amount, and it was his practice to balance accounts with it at periodic intervals, so that in the end no money whatever of the Chartered Company was directly employed for the financing of the Jameson Raid.

More important, after this lapse of time, was the point raised by Sir William Harcourt with regard to the phrase in Mr Rhodes' statement just quoted, and which runs, "Acting within my rights, in the autumn of 1895 I placed . . . upon the borders of the Transvaal a body of troops under Dr Jameson, prepared to act in the Transvaal in certain eventualities." Very pertinently Sir William Harcourt pressed Mr Rhodes as to what "his rights" were which enabled him to place a body of armed men on the borders of a friendly state with the ultimate object of invading that state in "certain eventualities." Ultimately Mr Rhodes was forced to admit that what he meant by "his rights" was in virtue of his position as managing director of the Chartered Company,—probably one of the weakest and least conclusive arguments he has ever employed in the whole course of his career. It was as clear as day-

light that he had no right—and could not possibly have any right—whatever to place troops on the Transvaal border in the manner he did, and it was a mistake on his part to employ the language he did.

There can be no doubt, however, that the statement which Mr Rhodes read greatly influenced the Committee in his favour, and the impression which it created in the country was undeniably favourable to him. That he had acted wrongly in taking such a prominent share in the proceedings which in the end led up to the Raid was obvious, but as his cross-examination went on it became increasingly clear that he was not cognisant of Jameson's intention to move in the manner he did. It was also clearly seen that the Uitlanders on the Rand were suffering great impositions, and had considerable grievances against the Transvaal Government; and in view of very large interests which Rhodes had in the goldfields, there were few people who denied his right to take a leading part in the Reform movement in Johannesburg.

So long as that Reform agitation was confined to strictly constitutional matters, no one could have objected to Mr Rhodes being connected with it, though, seeing that he was at this time the head of the Government of the neighbouring state of Cape Colony, it might have been in better taste had he refrained from mixing himself up so openly with the condition of unrest which prevailed on the Rand.

The Committee sat only two days each week, and it was not until March 5 that Rhodes' examination was concluded. Various members of the Committee questioned and re-questioned him on various points, and to all of these he returned perfectly frank and open answers.

After Mr Rhodes had given his evidence, and without awaiting the verdict of the Committee, he at once returned to South Africa, and began to work hard at the question of the pacification of Rhodesia and its future administration. Many other witnesses appeared before the Committee, which continued sitting until July 1897, and gave evidence respecting the various parts they had played in the Raid ; but this is not material to the present book, which concerns Rhodes and Rhodes alone. One thing was made clear : with the exception of Mr Beit, none of the directors of the British South Africa Company had been in Mr Rhodes' confidence respecting the action he was taking in placing the police on the Transvaal border. A rather surprising feature to many people in the evidence given by the various members of the Board of the Chartered Company was the very free hand they had allowed Mr Rhodes in dealing with the affairs of Rhodesia and the company generally. It is difficult, however, to see how they could have done otherwise. Rhodes was really the founder of the company, and he knew more about the conditions and requirements of Rhodesia, probably, than all the other directors put together.

At length the evidence of various witnesses came to an end, and the Committee decided that, as the session was already far spent, it would be better to present a report at once, on the first part of their inquiry, which related to the causes of the Raid, and to postpone the question of the future government of Rhodesia until a more opportune season. As events turned out, the second part of this inquiry was never proceeded with, and this is a matter for regret by those who uphold the Chartered Company as much

as by those who can only see evil in the company and its ways. There are many points connected with the company and the methods it employed in the administration of Rhodesia which it was desirable that the Committee should have investigated, and I have authority for saying that none regretted the abandonment of this part of the inquiry more keenly than did the directors and the officials of the British South Africa Company.

When the report of the Committee was submitted it was seen that it had arrived at the following conclusions :—

“ I. Great discontent had for some time previous to the incursion existed in Johannesburg, arising from the grievances of the Uitlanders.

“ II. Mr Rhodes occupied a great position in South Africa: he was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and, beyond all other persons, should have been careful to abstain from such a course of action as that which he adopted. As managing director of the British South Africa Company, as director of the De Beers Consolidated Mines, and goldfields of South Africa, Mr Rhodes controlled a great combination of interests: he used his position and those interests to promote and assist his policy.

“ Whatever justification there might have been for action on the part of the people of Johannesburg, there was none for the conduct of a person in Mr Rhodes' position, in subsidising, organising, and stimulating an armed insurrection against the Government of the South African Republic, and employing the forces and resources of the Chartered Company to support such a revolution. He seriously embarrassed both the Imperial and Colonial Governments,

and his proceedings resulted in the invasion of the territory of a state which was in friendly relations with her Majesty, in breach of the obligation to respect the right to self-government of the South African Republic under the conventions between her Majesty and that state. Although Dr Jameson 'went in' without Mr Rhodes' authority, it was always part of the plan that these forces should be used in the Transvaal in support of an insurrection. Nothing could justify such a use of such a force, and Mr Rhodes' heavy responsibility remains, although Dr Jameson at the last moment invaded the Transvaal without his direct sanction.

"III. Such a policy once embarked upon inevitably involved Mr Rhodes in grave breaches of duty to those whom he owed allegiance. He deceived the High Commissioner representing the Imperial Government, he concealed his views from his colleagues in the Colonial Ministry and from the board of the British South Africa Company, and led his subordinates to believe that his plans were approved by his superiors.

"IV. Your committee have heard the evidence of all the directors of the British South Africa Company with the exception of Lord Grey. Of those who were examined, Mr Beit and Mr Maguire alone had cognisance of Mr Rhodes' plans. Mr Beit played a prominent part in the negotiations with the Reform Union; he contributed large sums of money to the revolutionary movement, and must share full responsibility for the consequences.

"V. There is not the slightest evidence that the late High Commissioner in South Africa, Lord Rosmead, was made acquainted with Mr Rhodes'

plans. The evidence, on the contrary, shows that there was a conspiracy to keep all information on the subject from him. The Committee must, however, express a strong opinion upon the conduct of Sir Graham Bowyer, who was guilty of a grave dereliction of duty in not communicating to the High Commissioner the information which had come to his knowledge. Mr Newton failed in his duty in a like manner.

“VI. Neither the Secretary of State for the Colonies nor any of the officials of the Colonial Office received any information which made them, or should have made them or any of them, aware of the plot during its development.

“VII. Finally, your Committee desire to put on record an absolute and unqualified condemnation of the Raid and of the plans which made it possible. The result caused for the time being grave injury to British influence in South Africa. Public confidence was shaken, race feeling was imbibited, and serious difficulties were created with neighbouring states.”

It is difficult to see how the Committee could have arrived at any other conclusions than those given above, but it has since been accused of “whitewashing” Mr Rhodes and every one else concerned in the Raid. Mr Labouchere, of course, found it incumbent upon him to vote against the otherwise unanimous finding of the Committee, and to prepare an elaborate “minority report,” which was very properly ignored by both the House of Commons and the country generally.

There was a somewhat acrimonious debate in the House of Commons when the report of the Committee was presented, but with the Front Opposition Bench

supporting, as it was bound to do, the adoption of the report, which certain of its own members had helped to frame, what little opposition there was speedily flickered out, though no little surprise was occasioned by the remark of Mr Chamberlain during his speech, that however much Mr Rhodes might have failed in his duties as a public man, there was nothing in the whole affair which rebounded to his private dishonour. Certain small and unimportant sections professed astonishment at this statement. It is so easy to astonish some people.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RHODES AND THE MATABELE REBELLION.

THE outburst of the Matabele against the rule of the Chartered Company and the increasing encroachments of the white settlers in their midst came about with remarkable suddenness. For some time there had been a growing feeling of discontent amongst the war-like Matabele (whose power, be it remembered, had not been really broken, as it ought to have been, in the first Matabele war), and the withdrawal of the white police from Rhodesia to accompany Dr Jameson on his raid into the Transvaal provided them with a peculiarly opportune moment for rising.

The insurrection began with a series of isolated and apparently disconnected murders of white settlers in various outlying districts, and it was some little time before the colonists of the Chartered Company really recognised that they were face to face with a very grave crisis. So soon, however, as it was seen that a general rebellion of the Matabele and the neighbouring tribes was in progress, the company and Mr Rhodes took every measure possible to quell the disturbances and to restore order in the country, though it was too late, as Mr Rhodes was quick to realise, to put the rising down otherwise than by hard

fighting. He immediately set about buying horses and rifles for the troops he saw it would be necessary to raise, the settlers in the country being too weak numerically to oppose the rebellious tribesmen with success.

So soon as the work of organisation for the struggle with the Matabele was in a sufficiently forward condition, Rhodes quitted Cape Town for the seat of action, and travelling up to Salisbury, attached himself to the column of the recently established Rhodesia Horse, which, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Beal, was preparing to set out from that town for Bulawayo. Bulawayo—at that time the centre of the disturbed district—was, in fact, in an absolute state of siege, the white inhabitants of the town and district being confined in a laager which had been set up in the market-place of the town, while the tribesmen raided and burnt almost up to the suburbs.

The first movement of the column, usually known as the Salisbury column, which Rhodes had joined, was to the Hanyani river, some twelve or fifteen miles from Salisbury, where a halt was called while transport arrangements were concluded. This question of transport was one of the most difficult with which Rhodes was called upon to grapple. Mules were very scarce in the country at this time, and though he had purchased large numbers of these animals in the Southern States of America and elsewhere, yet some time had necessarily to elapse before they could be landed. Trek-oxen died in all directions from rinderpest and the ravages of the tsetse-fly, so that it became a matter of no little complexity to provide sufficient transport for the troops.

After a little while this difficulty was surmounted,

and on April 18, 1896, the column was able to make a move towards the disturbed districts of Matabeleland. At this time, it should be borne in mind, there was absolutely no sign that the natives of Mashonaland, who were altogether of a more peaceful disposition than the warlike Matabele, would join in the rising; in fact, seeing that the advent of the white man had rescued them from the slavery, rapine, and massacre that had been their experience ever since the Matabele had trekked northwards across the Limpopo river, it was confidently expected that they would render the white dwellers every assistance in their power in their campaign against the rebel Matabele. That they did not do so, but preferred to join in the rising, is now, of course, a matter of history.

As the column moved forward an interesting episode took place at the little town of Enkeldoorn, situate close to the border of Matabeleland, which forms the centre of a farming community chiefly composed of trek-Boers from the Transvaal. Here, on account of the massacres of the settlers by the rebels which had taken place in the district, the colonists had formed a strong laager in the centre of the town, and when it became known among the inhabitants that Rhodes was with the column they gave him quite an ovation, firing salutes in his honour and receiving him more as a victorious general returning to his native land than as the man who had just previously played a leading part in engineering an armed raid against the race from which they had descended.

A "reception committee" was hastily formed, and an address of welcome was presented to Rhodes. In this document, which he still treasures as one of his most cherished possessions, the committee, Boers from

the Transvaal to a man, begged him to act towards them as a "father": "even as," the address went on, "Oom Paul Kruger has acted in the light of a father to the Boers of the Transvaal, so we would request you to act as a father to those Boers who have made their home in Rhodesia." And even after this to repeat, there are people who declare that "Cecil Rhodes is hated and loathed by the Dutch of South Africa, and always has been"! To say that Rhodes is hated most cordially by the corrupt Hollander clique which ex-President Kruger had gathered around him would be correct, and it may be added that the feeling is heartily reciprocated; but to say that Rhodes is hated to-day, or ever has been hated in the past, by the vast majority of the Dutch in South Africa, is merely a display of ignorance on the part of those making the statement.

Rhodes' response to this address was prompt and practical. He immediately subscribed a large sum out of his private purse towards indemnifying the Boers of Einkeldoorn for the losses they had sustained through the rising of the Matabele, and the almost total destruction of their cattle by the deadly rinderpest, while he further bought from them every "salted" horse they could spare him for the better equipment of the column.

It was not until the force reached Makalaka Kop that the first collision with the rebels occurred. The attitude of the Matabele on this occasion showed that they were not disposed to yield without a severe struggle. A sharp skirmish ensued, and then the rebels fell back, and, as the night was fast closing in, the white force was compelled to abandon any idea of following them up. From this point until the force

arrived at the town of Gwelo, about a hundred miles to the north-east of Bulawayo, the objective of the column, a running fight was kept up with the rebels for nearly the whole of the way.

On May 9, in the Mavin district, the first pitched battle between the Salisbury column and the Matabele was fought, and for the first time Rhodes found himself really under fire. His attitude at this juncture was characteristic. Despite the fact that the rebels were in very strong force—from 1000 to 2000—and were adopting the customary Zulu tactics of fierce rushes in the hope of overwhelming the handful of white men by sheer weight of numbers and massacring them with the short, stabbing assegai with which they were so expert, he calmly rode up and down the position entirely unarmed, and accompanied only by Sir Charles Metcalfe, seemingly quite unconscious of the Matabele bullets which were falling around him. Something of this unconcern was probably assumed, for there is a strong liking for theatrical effect in Rhodes' character; but all who have ever seen him under fire will admit that he scarcely seems to know what fear is. A striking instance of his intrepidity was given a short time later by his unarmed expedition to the Matoppo Hills, then the great stronghold of the rebels, to discuss with them terms of peace.

After the rebels had been beaten off, the column returned to Gwelo, and a few days later set off once more towards Bulawayo. When they reached the banks of the Shangani river, a strong white force from Bulawayo joined them, and the combined columns, still accompanied by Mr Rhodes, commenced a ten days' campaign against the rebels in the deserted Insiza district.

Almost as soon as Rhodes reached Bulawayo the announcement was made that, as it was daily becoming increasingly clear that the settlers were quite unable to crush the rebellion out by their own unaided efforts, the Imperial Government had determined to send up regular troops, and that Sir Frederick Carrington had been appointed to the supreme command. General Carrington speedily arrived at Bulawayo accompanied or followed by various other Imperial officers, including Major R. S. S. Baden-Powell, destined in a few years to gain a world-wide fame as the hero of Mafeking; Colonel Plumer of the York and Lancaster Regiment, another famous figure of the Transvaal war; Prince Alexander of Teck, and Major Vyvyan; while Colonel Alderson moved eastwards from Beira with a strong force of regular mounted infantry.

In the energetic hands of General Carrington, an officer with a long experience of native warfare in South Africa, the campaign speedily assumed a new aspect, and inch by inch the rebels were driven back on to their mountain fastnesses in the Matoppo Hills. Here they were enabled to offer a prolonged resistance to the efforts to force them to fight a decisive battle in the open which should finally end the war. So slow was the progress made at this stage of the war that with the approach of the rainy season General Carrington announced his intention to withdraw his troops into winter quarters, and to await the arrival of spring before entering upon any further operations.

This announcement, and the preparations which Sir Frederick Carrington made for carrying it into effect, struck consternation into the souls of Mr Rhodes and the British South Africa Company. Though the Imperial

Government had assumed the control of the operations, yet it was the Chartered Company which was providing the money for the conduct of the campaign, and a great drain had already been made upon its funds. While the British commander was abundantly justified from a military point of view in suspending operations until the rainy season had passed, yet this step, with the subsequent resumption of the campaign in the spring, would have added fully four or five million pounds sterling to the cost of the war, and this simply spelt absolute bankruptcy for the British South Africa Company.

Rhodes was once more confronted with a very grave problem which it was imperative that he should deal with at once ; but for a time he could see no way out of the difficulty, and had he been of a less resolute and dogged nature he might well have given up the task in despair, and let matters take their course. The funds of the Chartered Company were, as has just been said, sadly depleted, and the bulk of his private fortune was fully locked up, principally in his trans - continental telegraph and railway schemes ; besides, not even one of his great wealth could contemplate the prospect of being called upon to provide the sum of four or five millions sterling with any degree of equanimity. True, his credit was good for any amount practically, and he could have raised the sum required on loan without much difficulty ; but this could only have been done at ruinously high rates, and would seriously have crippled his resources and his freedom of action in the future, a thing which he was very anxious to avoid.

At length he evolved the daring scheme of going into the heart of the rebel country in the gloomy re-

cesses of the Matoppo Hills, and there seeing whether he did not still possess sufficient influence over the indunas, or chiefs, of the Matabele tribe, to induce them to lay down their arms, and to submit to the future domination of the white man.

To think with Rhodes is to act. No sooner had he mapped out this scheme and sketched in a few of the details than he made his way to Sir Frederick Carrington's headquarters in Bulawayo, and laid his plans for the ending of the war before the commander-in-chief of the Matabeleland Field Force. At first General Carrington was dubious of the success of the scheme, and rather disposed to regard it as a foolhardy one which was bound to result in failure, and in all probability in the massacre of Rhodes and all those who accompanied him. In the end, however, Rhodes managed to extract a promise from the British general that he would refrain from moving his troops into winter quarters until he had had an opportunity of giving his scheme a trial. In giving his consent to the scheme being tried, General Carrington was careful to stipulate that no responsibility was to attach to him in the event of the failure of the mission and the massacre of Rhodes and his followers.

So soon as Rhodes had got this permission he selected his companions for his peculiar undertaking, and the most dramatic and thrilling event in the whole of Rhodes' far from uneventful career was embarked upon. The men he selected to accompany him were Dr Hans Sauer, Mr Johann Colenbrander, an old hunter in the country who had great influence with the Matabele and spoke their language fluently, and who was to act as interpreter, and Captain Stent, a correspondent to the 'Cape Times,' to whose record

we are really indebted for all we know took place during the mission. Rhodes himself absolutely declines to talk about his own achievements either in public or in private life. There were only three white men with Rhodes, and the little party was completed by the inclusion of two friendly natives to act as guides.

Rhodes was steadfast in his refusal to allow any rifles or other weapons of warfare to be taken with the mission, and, though he raised no objection to his three white comrades having loaded revolvers, personally he carried nothing more deadly than a small riding - whip — conduct reminiscent of the friend of his early life in Bechuanaland, Colonel Charles Gordon. He likewise resolutely declined to avail himself of the offer of an armed escort which Sir Frederick Carrington urged upon him, judging it best to make no outward show of force whatever, but to appeal to the chivalrous instincts of the Matabele by approaching them in an entirely peaceful manner. As events turned out, he was fully justified in following this line of policy ; but it must be admitted that it was hazardous in the extreme, and one false step on the part of himself or his companions might have easily proved fatal to them all.

Having pitched his camp near to the Matoppos, Rhodes sent forward one of his native guides to ascertain the exact position of the Matabele chiefs, and their attitude towards the question of peace. The guide found the indunas holding an indaba, and at once, with a boldness and an absence of fear which was as commendable as it was uncommon in one of his race, approached the circle of chiefs and told them of Rhodes' nearness to them and his earnest desire to

put an end to the conflict. The indunas listened in silence, and some ominous murmurings took place among the younger chiefs ; but the elder men present speedily silenced this, and turning to the guide told him to tell their old friend "Johann" (Mr Colenbrander) that they would like to see him. They said they would like to see Mr Rhodes also, but did not dare to hope that he would visit them. If he would come to them, however, he would be very welcome, and neither he nor his companions would be molested or harmed in any way.

When the guide returned to the camp with this message, Rhodes, overjoyed to find that his plans were going so smoothly, at once made preparations for moving forward to the spot which the indunas had selected for the meeting.

This place was a natural amphitheatre among the hills, with beetling walls of frowning granite rising on every side of it to a height of fully 200 feet, while the place was further commanded by a large kopje. When Rhodes and his small band approached the spot they found both the kopje and the surrounding cliffs literally covered with natives, and this proved to be the most nervous moment for the little band of white men. Even if they relied implicitly on the promise of the indunas, what guarantee had they that the chiefs would be able to restrain the younger and more impetuous members of the tribe ? The least sign of faltering would have meant instant death, however ; so they moved briskly forward, and waited for the next act in the drama.

They had not long to wait, for a hastily improvised white flag was hoisted by the rebels on the kopje, and at the same moment a long procession of indunas

moved towards them in single file. These native chiefs, comprising all the leading men of the Matabele tribe, quickly formed a semicircle around Rhodes and his three companions, squatting down on the ground, and the indaba or palaver was begun.

The scene was striking. The four white men, to all appearance entirely unarmed, surrounded by the hordes of rebel Matabele, whose dark skins gleamed in the sunlight like so much polished ebony, and on whose hands the blood of so many cruelly butchered white men, women, and children was scarcely dry; while enclosing them on every side were the sheer walls of dark granite, and above the bright dazzling blue of the tropical sky. It was a study for a painter.

The proceedings opened with elaborate greetings between Mr Rhodes and the indunas; and Rhodes then, through Mr Colenbrander, who throughout the meeting stood at his side and acted as interpreter, asked the Matabele what they desired, while Mr Colenbrander on his part urged the chiefs "to tell their troubles to Rhodes, their father, who had come among them with peace in his heart." Thus urged, the indunas recounted all the evils and fancied evils which the advent of the white man and the rule of the Chartered Company had imposed upon them. They had many real grievances to ventilate without doubt, and Rhodes listened to all they said with great attention, and when the indunas had finished he was able to pacify them wonderfully. No more native police, he promised, should be set in authority over them; and as regarded the question of the seizing of their cattle, he pointed out that it had all along been his wish, and also that of the British South Africa

Company, that only such cattle as had actually been the property of the late king Lobengula should be taken. But he admitted that this had been very difficult to accomplish, and that the Native Commissioners had been at times sorely puzzled to decide which were the king's cattle and which were not. However, as the rinderpest had carried off practically the whole of the cattle in the country, it was not much good discussing this topic.

After he had spoken on other subjects of minor interest at some length, Rhodes embarked upon a line of conduct which absolutely amazed his companions, and caused them to feel seriously alarmed for his—and their—safety. His eyes blazing with anger, and with trembling lips, he turned on the indunas at his feet and attacked them, through the medium of Mr Colenbrander, who at first hesitated to translate his leader's remarks, for the cruel massacres they had committed. "I do not upbraid you," he said, "for making war on the white men; but why did you kill our women and children? For that you deserve no mercy!" The indunas made no reply to this accusation, but bowed their heads before the imperious white man in meek submission. Rhodes had tamed the rebellious Matabele as completely as any lion-tamer ever subjugated the "king of beasts."

"The past is past and done with," Rhodes continued after an impressive pause. "But what of the future? Is it to be peace or war?" Would the natives prefer to go on fighting the white man, whose numbers were increasing daily, or should the struggle come to an end? This was the question on which everything hung, and Rhodes and his companions awaited the Matabele reply with an im-

patience that they could hardly conceal. The reply was given by one of the oldest indunas present, who rose from his position in the semicircle, raised a light wand or stick above his head, and advanced towards Rhodes, saying, "See, this is my rifle,—I cast it at your feet." Repeating the movement, he cried, "And this is my spear, which I likewise cast at your feet." As he retired to his place once more all the chiefs around set up a loud cry of assent, and the Matabele rebellion was at an end.

Rhodes could scarcely conceal a smile of triumph as he turned to his companions prior to addressing the chiefs before the indaba broke up. In this speech he placed before the indunas, in terse and simple language which they could easily understand, how it would be necessary for them all to work together to remedy the ravages which the war had brought about, and to prevent the famine with which the country was threatened owing to no crops having been sown that year and the killing of the cattle by the rinderpest. He would remain at Bulawayo, he told them, so that they might come to him and consult him on any difficulties which might arise. When he had finished, the indunas on their part assured him that neither he nor the white people had anything further to fear: the war was finally at an end, and they promised not to fight again.

Rhodes and his comrades then took their leave, and prepared to return to their camp amid the noisy salutations of the Matabele warriors who clustered around them. Just before they rode away Rhodes turned his face towards the amphitheatre once more, and remarked to Dr Sauer, "It is such scenes as this which make life really worth living," and he then relapsed

into a silence, lost in the tumult of his own thoughts, which lasted the whole of the journey.

Arrived at his camp, he remained there for some days longer, during which time the Matabele chiefs came and went exactly as they pleased, and the younger warriors purloined his blankets and other impedimenta in the most friendly manner imaginable. At length he prepared to return to Bulawayo, where the colonists were waiting to fête him right royally. He now felt more at his ease than he had done for long. He had succeeded in bringing the rebellion to an end and in rescuing the British South Africa Company from utter ruin ; but over all his gladness hung the dark shadow of the coming Parliamentary Inquiry into the Jameson Raid, when he knew that not even the great personal bravery and self-abnegation he had displayed on his venturesome expedition into the rebel stronghold could avert or mitigate the severe censure he would have to endure. He knew the characters of his personal enemies too well to imagine that, now they had him to some extent in their power, they would forego one jot or tittle of their attacks on him, and that anything he might say or do would not weigh in his favour to the extent of one poor scruple.

However, there the thing was, and it had to be faced, and he was never the one to meet troubles half-way. He devoted himself to the task of completing the pacification of Rhodesia and repairing the damages which the combination of war and rinderpest had wrought in the land, without giving much heed to what the future might have in store.

CHAPTER XIX.

EVENTS AFTER THE REBELLION.

WHEN Rhodes came to survey the twin provinces of Mashonaland and Matabeleland, he found them practically wrecked and devastated from end to end. The mines had been either maliciously damaged by the rebels or had been ruined by being left uncared for; shafts were full of water, timbers were rotted, and the passages so laboriously hewed in the solid rock had collapsed and become blocked with earth. Agriculture, too, had been absolutely neglected, and where previously to the rising of the natives had been flourishing farms and homesteads, there were now wildernesses, deserted and overrun with weeds. The white settlers of the country were collected in the towns of Salisbury and Bulawayo; and even after peace had been proclaimed those who, before the outbreak of the rebellion, had dwelt in the outlying district far removed from their fellow-Europeans, were nervous of returning to their farms and mines, as, so far as they could see, there was no guarantee that so soon as the troops had been withdrawn from the country the natives would not rise again to massacre.

In addition to the ravages of the war there was the damage done by the rinderpest, which had killed

off practically the whole of the cattle in the country. To a dweller in South Africa loss of cattle is a far more serious matter than persons in this country can realise. All the transport in Rhodesia at this time was done, speaking generally, by means of trek-oxen, so that with the death of the cattle the country was deprived of what was really its only source of obtaining provisions and other necessities.

The task which confronted Rhodes at this juncture was colossal, and one, moreover, which demanded many hours of anxious thought on his part. The first thing to be done, he foresaw, was to extend the line of railway which ran northwards from Cape Town through Kimberley to British Bechuanaland, from its terminus at Mafeking northwards to Bulawayo, with as little delay as possible. He had also given a promise some time previously to the inhabitants of Salisbury that he would push forward the building of a railway to connect that town with the East Coast at Beira at the earliest possible moment. By the building of these two lines, he perceived, the spectre of famine which then hung over the country would be effectively abolished in the future.

Another factor on which he relied for the better civilisation of the country to which he had given his name, and to lessen the chance of any future rebellion of the natives, was the trans-continental telegraph, which he was then hurrying forward from the south towards Salisbury and Bulawayo. In his mind's eye he already saw it stretching across the Dark Continent from Cape Town in the south to Alexandria in the north, or, as the public, with its love of alliteration has come to term it, "from the Cape to Cairo."

The realisation of these vast schemes took time, and also money ; but, as regards the latter, Rhodes had very little to fear, for the new issue of shares in the British South Africa Company, which was made in order to replenish its treasury after the extravagance of the war, was eagerly taken up in London, though it was obvious that for many years to come there would be no return from the country for the money which was sunk in it. The general public, however, had a faith in the future prosperity of the country which nothing could shake, and an even stronger faith, perhaps, in Cecil Rhodes. Indeed, the personal magnetism which Rhodes exercises over all with whom he comes into contact is most remarkable.

When it became clear that the natives had really had enough fighting, and were disposed to settle down on their land and dwell in amity with the white men, the confidence of the white settlers began to return, and once more agriculturists and mineral prospectors spread themselves over Rhodesia, and white immigration into the country commenced. A striking feature of this immigration, and one which Rhodes was particularly glad to see, was the number of Boers from the Transvaal who entered Rhodesia—and this despite the efforts of Kruger and Joubert to prevent the Burghers trekking northwards into the new colony. The government at Pretoria, as was perhaps only natural, viewed with alarm the constant stream of Boers crossing the Limpopo and taking up their abode in Rhodesia, and Rhodes was correspondingly elated. “I have got 2000 of Mr Kruger’s Burghers,” he declared in a speech which he delivered about this time, “and if he does not look out I shall have them all. The Boers will not be content to stay on the

sour veldt of the Transvaal when they learn that there is sweet veldt in Rhodesia."

Despite the many drawbacks from which Rhodesia had suffered in the past, it now began to make great headway, and signs of a "boom" were to be found on every hand. With this flourishing state of affairs in existence, Rhodes was free to turn his attention to other matters that were urgently demanding his attention. Prominent among these was the impending general election at the Cape in 1898. After his return to South Africa in 1897, at the conclusion of his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee, he went straight up to Rhodesia, and for a time devoted himself entirely to the regeneration of the country and to mingling freely with the colonists, so as to find out the better what were their wants and their aspirations. In fact, released for a time from any official connection with the British South Africa Company, and with the responsibility of the premiership of Cape Colony no longer on his shoulders, he became a colonist of Rhodesia pure and simple.

The course which politics at the Cape was taking, however, soon compelled him to come forward from his obscurity once more, and to set about girding on his armour for the coming fight. With characteristic determination he declined to obey the mandate of Mr Jan Hofmeyr and the Afrikander Bond, and to efface himself from public life because of the fiasco of the Jameson Raid; for he knew that the task which he had imposed on himself when he first took his seat in the Cape Parliament, the extension and consolidation of the British Empire in South Africa, was not yet accomplished, and it was not in his nature to withdraw his hand from the plough in the middle of a

furrow. When the time for a general election came round in 1898, therefore, he once more stood as a candidate for his old constituency of Barkly West.

This election bade fair to be the fiercest which had ever been fought in Cape Colony, and it needed no little amount of courage on the part of Mr Rhodes to come forward, for the amount of vituperation and scurrility with which he was assailed was unexampled in the annals of South African politics. No allegation was deemed too base or too unfounded in fact to be brought against him: the character assigned to him by his enemies would have been a trifle exaggerated if given to the Father of Lies himself.

The Afrikander Bond had selected Mr W. Schreiner as its nominal figurehead and the future Premier of the Cape. Mr Hofmeyr, of course, was the prime wirepuller of this anti-Rhodes and anti-British organisation, but he declined to take the open leadership of the party and to emerge into the light of day, preferring to push Mr Schreiner, certainly one of the ablest and broadest-minded of the Afrikander party at the Cape, into the foreground, and to proceed with his scheming and intriguing under the surface. Jan Hofmeyr has not received the nickname of "The Mole" for nothing.

Working hand in glove with the Bond in its efforts to discredit Rhodes and to reduce him and the British Progressive party at the Cape to a state of political impotence were President Kruger and the Hollander clique at Pretoria. The vast resources of the Transvaal secret service fund were drawn upon to an enormous extent, and no stone was left unturned to drive Rhodes and his party from the field.

Rhodes met these personal assaults with scorn and contempt, but he would have been more than human had he not on occasions been stung to retort. Hence it comes that in the many election speeches he made at this time there is now and again a strongly personal vein to be found. For the most part, however, he refrained from descending to the methods of his adversaries, and was content to urge upon the electors the desirability of adopting the programme for legislative and administrative purposes he had mapped out. The chief points in this programme were the removal of the duty on butcher's-meat which was in existence in the colony, the reduction of the wheat tax, the introduction of a duty on brandy, and fresh regulations to forbid the sale of liquor to natives. The question of a subsidy from Cape Colony towards the support of the British navy also figured in his programme. These were very progressive views to set before the electors, and some were not at all popular with certain sections. The proposed tax on brandy, for example, was very obnoxious to the Dutch brandy manufacturers of the Cape, as was the threatened further restriction upon the sale of liquor to natives; for it was obvious that if Rhodes were returned to power and he carried this bill, the sale of spirits, especially of the commoner and cheaper forms, would at once be immensely decreased. It was the story of the Glen Grey Act over again.

Prominent among the many reforms which Rhodes now urged upon the electors was the question of the amendment of the educational laws of the colony, which were at that time in a very unsatisfactory condition. His scheme was to create a compulsory form of education, of a kind similar to that in

vogue in most of the other self-governing branches of the Empire, with certain permissive clauses in it. This did not commend itself in the least to the majority of the highly conservative old Dutch farmers of the colony, who, having managed to rub along themselves very well without any education save of the most rudimentary and fragmentary kind, failed to see what need there was for their children to acquire learning. Taken in its entirety, it has to be said that Rhodes' programme did not meet with the general acceptance of the Dutch portion of the voters; but the British and European voters generally rallied round him enthusiastically.

The violence of his adversaries, too, served to gain for Rhodes support which he would otherwise have lacked, for by the very rancour and personal hatred which they displayed, many sober-minded men of the Dutch party were driven to take up the cudgels on Rhodes' behalf and to support him though they might differ from him on matters of detail. On the question of a contribution by the Cape to the cost of the British navy all parties were practically agreed, though there was some difference of opinion as to what form this contribution should take. The proposal originally had arisen about the time of the Diamond Jubilee of the late Queen, when the delegates from Cape Colony to Great Britain on that occasion were empowered to make the offer to the Imperial Government. At first the proposal was that an annual sum of money, tentatively fixed at £30,000, should be set aside by the Cape Government for this purpose; but ultimately this made way in favour of one for building a battleship or a first-class cruiser,—whichever seemed best in the opinion of the Lords of

the Admiralty—the expense of which was to be borne entirely by the colony.

This was the shape which the gift eventually took, and H.M.S. Africa was the result. It is only fair to mention here that at the time the necessary vote for this purpose was carried through the Cape Legislature an Afrikander majority was in power.

Needless to say, Rhodes was an ardent supporter of this scheme, for anything which tended to denote in a tangible and practical manner the bond of common interest which exists between the colonies and the Motherland—the Imperial tie, as it has been aptly termed—found great favour with him. Personally, however, he was in favour of the annual vote of a sum of money—to be applied as the naval authorities thought best; for, as he put it in one of his speeches on the subject, “a ship might conceivably go down, and then the factor which brought the sentiment which had prompted the gift home to them would be lost.” As an illustration of the advantage of an annual contribution over the gift of a ship, he quoted the remark of one of his friends during the time when the concessions from Lobengula were being sought for and the question of the terms to be offered to the Matabele king was under consideration. It was undecided whether the Chartered Company should offer Lobengula a lump sum down or a monthly stipend. The gentleman in question was in favour of the latter alternative for the following reason. “If you give the king a monthly instalment,” he said, “you will be continually reminding him of our existence and of the benefits he is receiving from us; whereas a lump sum paid down on the nail may, and probably will, instantly be squandered over the rami-

factions of his harem." This illustrates very clearly Rhodes' view on the question of Cape Colony's contribution to the British navy.

A proposal had been thrown out by a small party of the advanced Afrikander party, that instead of a ship or an annual sum of money, a cable to bring the Cape into closer and better communication with the mother country should be substituted. This Rhodes strongly opposed, on the ground that the proposal then before the colony was one of a contribution to the navy. The question as to whether they should at some future time agree to bear part of the expense of laying a new cable between Great Britain and the Cape was, he contended, quite a different matter, and one with which they were not concerned at that moment.

Naturally Rhodes had to devote much of his attention to the causes of the unrest which was then prevailing among the Uitlander population of Johannesburg, and to explain his connection with it. He made no secret of the fact—and indeed it would have been the rankest hypocrisy on his part if he had done so—of the utter detestation that he felt towards the corrupt oligarchy of Mr Kruger and his satellites. He saw, and he emphasised the fact very plainly, that the Transvaal was the plague-spot which was in danger of corrupting the whole of South Africa. The Hollander clique, from which the true Boer population of the Transvaal has ever to be carefully distinguished, was wilfully doing all that lay in its power to retard and wreck the commercial and economic progress of the sub-continent; and this he strenuously protested against.

It is true, too, to say that the animosity and rancour with which Mr Kruger and the extreme

Afrikander party were pursuing him at this time stung him severely, and therefore he permitted himself to attack his opponents and their policy—if they had a policy worthy of the name—more openly and with greater fierceness than would otherwise have been the case.

When he came to the question of the extension to the north of British rule, he found himself on a rather different footing, inasmuch as he had here opposed to him scores of people who were in agreement with him on other points and were very indignant at the unscrupulous methods of the anti-Rhodes party. To many of the colonists of the Cape, mainly those of Dutch extraction, it seemed that the addition of Rhodesia to the British Empire was an unwise step, and would ultimately tend to the disadvantage of Cape Colony. Such an opinion may read rather strangely to staunch supporters of the "expansionist" policy at home, but it must be borne in mind that so recently as the date of the withdrawal of the British claims to the sovereignty of the Orange Free State a responsible Minister of the Crown permitted himself publicly to assert that "all Great Britain really required in South Africa was a coaling-station at the Cape." How we have progressed since those days!

Rhodes found it a matter of considerable difficulty to convince this "little Africa" school—if such a term may be permitted—that his policy of bringing the vast hinterland of the Cape under the British flag was the best one, and that it was impossible that this stretch of fertile and healthy country should remain fallow, as it were, and occupied only by a few tribes of savages. If Great Britain, through the instru-

mentality of Mr Rhodes, had not assumed the control of what is now known as Southern and Northern Rhodesia, then some other Power—Germany probably—would have done so. Then where would the Cape have been, and what would have been the position of Great Britain in South Africa? On the ground of expediency alone, and without any reference to other and higher motives, this expansion-to-the-north policy of Rhodes was the salvation of Cape Colony.

During this election Rhodes laid great stress upon the need which was increasing daily for the federation of the various states of South Africa. He had for years preached this doctrine, but for the most part it had fallen on unheeding ears. The obstructive policy of the Transvaal prevented any real union being arrived at, and whenever Rhodes, either in Cape Colony, or in Rhodesia, or at home in England, referred to his ambition for the federation of the various South African states under the supremacy of the British flag, he was promptly met with the question, "What about the Transvaal? Will she ever consent to enter a union which will mean the acknowledgment of the overlordship of Great Britain?"

After-events have shown pretty conclusively that the Transvaal never would have taken part in any such scheme, and that the real policy of Mr Kruger and his government was to bring about a union of the South African states, it is true, but also a union in which the British should have no place,—a union in which the Dutch should be the governing body, and members of other nationalities mere helots—hewers of wood and drawers of water.

It was Rhodes' idea at this time, however, that

"the Transvaal could be squared," as he put it in his own blunt fashion. Even the Jameson Raid he did not regard as forming an unsurpassable obstacle in the way of this federation scheme. His idea was that, if all went well, he would in time be able to offer the Transvaal such terms to enter the union that it could not afford to remain outside. With Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange Free State, and Rhodesia banded together for a common object, and with a common end in view, the Transvaal could not have for long remained outside and aloof.

A point on which Rhodes laid considerable stress at this time in urging the possibility of the Transvaal adopting a more enlightened policy was the fact that even among the Boers there was a growing discontent with the system of misgovernment which the Hollander clique at Pretoria was pursuing. As an evidence of this discontent he quoted the significant fact that no less than a thousand Burghers had at that time quitted the country of their birth, and had settled in Rhodesia.

The reason for this trek to the north on the part of the Boers of the Transvaal was twofold. In the first place, they found that there was better grazing-land to be obtained in Rhodesia than was the case in the Transvaal; and, in the second, they found that they enjoyed greater freedom and justice under the rule of the Chartered Company than in the South African Republic.

Naturally at this election the question of the future relationship of the two races in Cape Colony received a great deal of attention. Rhodes' policy was the same as it had always been, to bring about the complete fusion of the British and Afrikaner sections

of the population, and to show them that their interests were absolutely identical. The policy of Mr Hofmeyr and the Afrikander Bond, on the other hand, was to use the Jameson Raid for all it was worth to stir up race hatred, and to make the Afrikanders suspicious of their British neighbours. The future prosperity of the colony counted as nothing with them. Let them snatch a party victory at the polls, and bring about the discomfiture of Mr Rhodes and his supporters, and the country might go to rack and ruin for all they cared. It is lamentable to observe the depths to which the anti-progress party at the Cape descended at this time, and the unscrupulous methods which it employed; but since then we have seen much the same tactics employed nearer home, so that we are not so much surprised as might otherwise have been the case.

In a speech which he delivered during the course of his election campaign at Vryburg, on the very land that he had by his own unaided efforts saved for Cape Colony fourteen years previously, Rhodes exploded in effective fashion the argument, which his opponents had been working to such good purpose, that he was opposed—and always had been opposed—to the Afrikander element in the colony.

“How,” he asked his audience, “am I against the Afrikanders? Can you quote me a case? Has any privilege ever been denied an Afrikander and granted to any other race or class? Surely if Kruger’s Burghers have equal rights, and the Free State Burghers have rights, it is not likely that I should deny them to the people of Cape Colony. I tell you these are lies, and now I put another aspect of the question. Do you think that you are wise in howling

against Rhodes in every part of the country, and especially here in Bechuanaland? You may by your folly drive the north to take up a hostile attitude towards you, and what, I ask, do you imagine that you are going to gain? I will tell you. You will gain race feeling, you will succeed in setting race against race; but that will not feed you, that will not give you land, that will not secure the freedom of yourselves or your children. What, then, is it going to do? I will tell you. It is going to starve you."

This was very direct speaking—almost brutally so, in fact—and Rhodes' enemies at once seized on this speech and claimed that it contained a covert threat that if Cape Colony refused to return him to office, he would sever himself from the colony and devote himself to stirring up feeling in Rhodesia against the Cape, and to the employment of every means in his power to wreck Cape Colony and to exploit the north at its expense. That anything of this nature was meant by Rhodes it is absurd to suppose; but perhaps the words he used on this occasion were open to more than one construction.

The result of the election was a narrow victory for the Afrikaner party, and Mr W. P. Schreiner, Rhodes' old friend and parliamentary ally, was elected as Premier of the Bond majority. This result was mainly brought about by the inequalities of the electoral system in vogue in the colony, and an agitation for a redistribution of seats was forthwith set on foot by the Progressive party. In a speech delivered, like the one previously quoted, at Vryburg, Rhodes brought out the unfairness of the system very lucidly. He said: "If this election had been carried out on the redistribution they [the Afrikaner party] had agreed

to, we should have won this election by forty-five seats, but we thought it unfair and would not agree to their terms, and so we fought it on the old registration. But even now we are almost at a tie as regards members, and as regards voters we have a vast majority."

In addition to this hardly fought campaign, 1898 was an eventful year for Rhodes in other ways. On April 21, for example, he was unanimously recalled to the board of the Chartered Company at a general meeting of the shareholders held in the Cannon Street Hotel, London. The shareholders had learnt by experience the value of Rhodes' services, and looking at the matter from a purely commercial standpoint, they decided that they would be acting against their own interests to try and do without him any longer. Rhodes immediately assented to the wishes of the shareholders, and forthwith took his seat once more among the directors of the Chartered Company amidst the enthusiastic plaudits of the large number of people present. It was also decided at this meeting to increase the capital of the British South Africa Company to £5,000,000 sterling, so as to provide funds for repairing the ravages caused by the Matabele rebellion and the rinderpest, and to enable the development of the country to be proceeded with as little delay as possible.

On October 20 of this year, also, an Order in Council was issued which modified the original charter granted to the British South Africa Company and provided for the future government of Rhodesia. This document was the most important concerning Rhodesia which had been issued since the granting of the charter.

Its most important stipulation was for the formation of a legislative council for Southern Rhodesia of a quasi-representative character, to assist the Resident Commissioner—a new post formed by the Order, which was to be filled by an officer under the control of the Imperial authorities. This council in the first instance was to consist of four members to be elected by popular vote, being two each from the provinces of Mashonaland and Matabeleland, and five members nominated by the Chartered Company. In addition to these, the administrators of Mashonaland and Matabeleland respectively were to be *ex-officio* members of the council. Seeing that the Chartered Company was still to remain responsible for finding the necessary capital for the administration and development of the country, it was only right and proper that it should have the predominant voice on this council, whose most important duties would be to decide how the money should be expended.

The Order further provided for the appointment of an Imperial officer to decide how the police and other armed forces of Rhodesia should be employed. In the case of this officer, and in that of the resident commissioner, salaries had to be provided for out of the funds of the British South Africa Company, though the Company, and quite properly, had no voice whatever in the selection of these two officials.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TRANS-AFRICAN RAILWAY SCHEME.

IT was in the early days of Mr Rhodes' political career that there first occurred to him the idea for a railway to cut right through the heart of the Dark Continent and to connect Cape Town with Egypt and the Mediterranean. The dream of an "all-red" railway line from the south to the north of Africa seized hold of his imagination, and the more he dwelt upon it the greater his determination to carry it out. His idea of "empire-making" in Africa did not stop short at the Zambesi, or even at the lakes. On and on he desired to go, absorbing the whole of the unclaimed portions of Africa in his gigantic scheme, until the whole of the interior was dominated by the British flag. The sea alone was to be the boundary.

That his great scheme for an uninterrupted stretch of British territory from Cape Colony to the Nile was not destined to be accomplished is now a matter of history. The junction of the Congo Free State and German East Africa effectually put an end to the "all-red" route across the continent, and though Rhodes did all in his power to rescue even the smallest ribbon of territory for Great Britain across which his iron road might run, his efforts resulted in failure. The

Imperial Government was averse from undertaking any further responsibilities in Africa, and Rhodes was forced to yield.

He has always been a firm believer in the efficacy of the railroad as an agent of civilisation, and one of his earliest efforts in the Cape Parliament was to procure the extension of the Cape Government railway to Kimberley. This line really formed the first link in the great "Cape to Cairo" railway scheme which was to become so famous in after-years. Having carried his point, in the teeth of considerable opposition, he paused for a while, but he resolutely declined to accept the dictum of the Afrikander Bond that Kimberley should remain for all time the terminus of this railway, and that any future extension northwards should be by way of the railway from the Cape to Bloemfontein and Johannesburg. "No," said Rhodes in effect when this proposal was first raised, "the result of that policy would be to give the control of the trade of the interior into the hands of the two Boer states, who could use their position to the detriment of British interests." Bechuanaland was, he saw, the true route through which this railway to the north should pass, consequently the next section of the line to be built was that from Kimberley to Vryburg and Mafeking. Here a long halt was called while Rhodes raised the necessary funds to carry on the line farther.

As far as Kimberley the railway had been built and maintained by the Cape Government. Beyond that the Cape Legislature resolutely refused to go, or to accept any responsibility. Nothing daunted, Rhodes set about forming a private company, the Bechuanaland Railway Company, to carry the line northwards.

The outbreak of the Matabele rebellion and the great difficulties of transport through the death of the trek-oxen from the terrible rinderpest brought home to him very clearly the necessity of pushing forward his railway to Rhodesia with all speed, and he redoubled his efforts. The line reached Bulawayo towards the end of 1897, and was formally opened, amid a scene of great popular rejoicing, on November 4 of that year. Rhodes was now 1350 miles nearer the realisation of his trans-continental railway scheme than when he started.

As the pioneer of his railway, Rhodes inaugurated his trans-continental telegraph project, and even before the outbreak of the native rising in Rhodesia had made his plans for the carrying of the magic wire across the plateau of British Central Africa, past the great lakes, and onward through the innermost recesses of that mysterious country which lies between Lake Tanganyika and the head-waters of the Nile.

In 1898 the telegraph line had reached Kota-Kota, to the north-east of Salisbury, and was rapidly being pushed forward to Abercorn, on the southern shores of Lake Tanganyika. The cost of building this portion of the wire had been, in round figures, £140,000, and the original capital of the African Trans-Continental Telegraph Company, Limited, which Rhodes had formed for the purpose of constructing and controlling the line, was practically exhausted. The next section to be built was from Abercorn northwards to Uganda, a distance of 600 miles. Rhodes estimated the cost of this section at £100,000, and when it was built there remained the country between Uganda and Khartoum—the terminus of the Egyptian telegraph system—a stretch of 1300 miles, which the

wire would have to cross. The cost of building the whole of the line would be, in Rhodes' opinion, £100 per mile, and there seems to be no reason to suppose that this estimate will be greatly exceeded.

The chief object which the telegraph line was to serve, in Rhodes' mind, was that of forerunner to the railway and pioneer of white civilisation ; but he was keenly alive also to the commercial possibilities of the line, which, he saw, would when completed compete seriously with the companies owning submarine cables between Great Britain and South Africa. The present cost of telegraphing from London to Cape Town is 4s. a-word. From London to Egypt the cost varies from 1s. 7d. to 2s. 3d. The charge per word Rhodes had decided upon for telegraphing over the whole length of the trans-African wire was 6d. ; so that there would be a net saving of at least 1s. 3d. for every word sent by the new overland route. At the present rate of progress the entire line from Cape Colony to Egypt should be in working order by the end of 1903.

There was rather a long halt in the building of the railway after the line had reached Bulawayo. There were other, and perhaps more pressing, matters for Rhodes to deal with, and he also had to decide on the best method of raising the large amount of capital necessary for the extension of the railway from Bulawayo to the banks of the Zambesi river, which was to form the next section of the line.

In the early part of 1898, however, he found himself ready to move in this matter, and accordingly sailed for Europe for the purpose of putting his schemes on foot. His idea at this time was that the Bechuanaland Railway Company should raise the money on loan, with a guarantee for the due pay-

ment of the interest of such loan from the British South Africa Company. With the object of giving additional security, and to enable him to get the money on easier terms than might otherwise have been possible, he decided to ask the Imperial Government to give a collateral guarantee. In view of the immense benefits which the opening of the line would confer on Imperial interests in every part of Africa, he anticipated no difficulty in obtaining this, especially seeing that it was in reality only a formality, as the whole of the funds of the Bechuanaland Railway Company and the British South Africa Company would have had to be exhausted before the Imperial Government was called upon to pay a single penny in connection with the matter.

On his arrival in England Mr Rhodes inaugurated a correspondence with the Colonial Office on the subject of this guarantee, which it is to be regretted is much too lengthy to be reproduced here. His first letter on this question was dated April 28, 1898, and was addressed to the Colonial Office. He opened this letter by inviting the co-operation of the Imperial Government in the building of the railway from Bulawayo as far north as Lake Tanganyika, and stated that the length of this section was between 700 and 800 miles. No survey, he stated, had been made of the country through which this portion of the line would pass, but trustworthy information had been obtained concerning the conformation of the country to be crossed, and the engineering difficulties which would have to be surmounted. These difficulties, Mr Rhodes added, would probably be no greater than those which had been successfully dealt with on the Mafeking-Bulawayo section of the line.

In this letter Rhodes enclosed a document he had received from Sir Gordon Sprigg, the Premier of Cape Colony, which stated that should Rhodes be successful in obtaining the assistance and countenance of the Imperial Government in his railway schemes, the members of the Cape Cabinet would be prepared to confer together with a view to submitting proposals to the Cape Parliament under which that Government also might practically contribute towards the cost of the work of extending the line. This letter is important if only from the fact that it demonstrated the interest which the Government of Cape Colony took in the proposed northern extension of the railway, and the benefits which they anticipated would accrue to the colony from the opening of such a line.

Mr Rhodes then went on to say that he estimated the net cost of the construction of the line from Bulawayo to Lake Tanganyika at about two millions sterling. This estimate was based on the fact that the average cost of the existing portion of the railway had been about £3000 per mile. The letter continued as follows :—

“I shall recommend the Bechuanaland Railway Company, Limited, to undertake the extension, and, with the sanction of her Majesty’s Government, to raise the necessary funds by further issues of debentures, which will be secured upon the whole of its assets and undertakings, after provision has been made for safeguarding the rights of holders of the present debenture issue of £2,000,000. Subject to the present debentures, the security offered will be that of the whole line of 579 miles from Vryburg to Bulawayo, of any further extensions, of the subsidies

paid by the Imperial Government and the British South Africa Company, at present amounting to £30,000 per annum, and of blocks of valuable land in the Bechuanaland Protectorate of an aggregate area of 8000 square miles.

“In the event of my recommendation being adopted, the British South Africa Company is prepared to guarantee the interest upon the whole of the further issue of debentures required, and, with a view to the creation of these debentures upon more favourable terms than would otherwise be possible, I would suggest that a collateral guarantee should be given by her Majesty’s Government on the basis of interest either at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for a limited term of thirty years, or of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in perpetuity. I would further suggest that the line should be constructed in 200-mile sections ; that the funds required for each section should be raised separately ; and that it should be open to her Majesty’s Government to refuse to guarantee the interest upon the debentures to be issued for the construction of any section unless satisfied as to the commercial prospects of the proposed extension, and as to the nature of the contracts to be entered into.”

The first of these proposed 200-mile sections would, as Mr Rhodes pointed out, tap the valuable coalfields which had been discovered in the Bubi, Mafungubusi, Sengwe, and Sanyati districts of Rhodesia, and would traverse the promising gold districts of Bembesi, the Lower Sebakwe, and the Lower Umfuli. The second section would pass through the Lo Maghondi district, which is covered with ancient workings, and in which many gold-reefs that had been favourably reported upon by competent engineers had already

been exposed. Once the Zambesi was crossed, the line would run through an excellent cattle country, densely populated by natives, and would for many years to come absorb the greater portion of the trade of the Upper Zambesi, the Upper Congo, and the western portions of German East Africa, in addition to that of Northern Rhodesia. Over a great portion of this vast area of country it is probable, as Mr Rhodes was careful to emphasise, that an important industry in rubber and other vegetable products will be developed by the time that the railway is running through that region.

These, then, were the prospects of the line for the construction of which Rhodes was seeking the Government guarantee. It must be clearly understood that he did not ask the Imperial Government to subscribe a solitary farthing towards the making of this railway. It has never been his policy to appeal to the home authorities for financial aid for his schemes. When he has been unable to raise the money, or to provide it out of his own pocket, for the realisation of his gigantic projects, he has put the matter on one side until a more favourable moment for obtaining the funds he required has presented itself. Instead of trying to draw upon the Imperial Treasury for the extension and consolidation of the British Empire in South Africa, he has been the means, on at least one notable occasion, of relieving it of a considerable burden. Had it not been for the annual subsidy of £10,000 which for some years he paid to the Imperial Government out of the funds of the British South Africa Company for the administration of the British Central African Protectorate, either the taxpayer at home would have had to find

that sum, or the small but promising colony would have had to have been abandoned several years ago.

The reply to this communication of Mr Rhodes was forwarded to him by the Colonial Office on July 28, exactly three months after his letter was written, which must be considered fairly prompt for a Government department. In it Mr Chamberlain said that the scheme for the establishment of such a railway as Mr Rhodes had outlined, tending as it would to develop the territories of the British South Africa Company for trade and commerce and ultimately to render them self-supporting, commended itself to the Government. Before the Government could invite Parliament to give it financial support, however, they desired to be furnished with more definite information on certain points. The Government considered that any proposal for assistance on their part should for the time being be confined to the first section northwards from Bulawayo, which Rhodes had roughly estimated would cost £500,000 to construct.

Information was asked for as to the data on which Rhodes had calculated that the district through which this portion of the line would pass would yield a sufficient amount of traffic to justify the extension of the line. It was also, and very properly, deemed essential by the Government that an adequate survey of this section of the line should be made on which a trustworthy and fairly accurate estimate of the cost of its construction could be based.

Mr Chamberlain said that in return for the support of the Imperial Government it would be expected that favourable terms for the transport of mails, troops, Government officials and stores would be granted, as was the case with the portion of the line then being

worked, and in the event of the extension becoming a source of additional profit to the railway company the Government would want a reasonable share of those profits. Finally, Mr Chamberlain stated that he attached great importance to substantial co-operation on the part of the Cape Government being forthcoming, in view of the fact that the railways of the colony would be largely benefited by the success of Mr Rhodes' scheme, and he therefore considered that evidence of such co-operation should be a first condition of any assistance to be rendered by the Imperial Government.

With this letter the first stage of the negotiations between Rhodes and the Imperial Government came to an end, and so far all seemed plain sailing. The hint, however, that the Imperial Government would expect some share of the profits, in the event of the line proving a financial success, did not commend itself to Rhodes very strongly ; but as this was a matter which he considered it would be possible to settle with the Government in an amicable manner, and one which should be satisfactory to both sides alike, he did not let it worry him much. Shortly after the receipt of this letter he returned again to the Cape.

He was back in England very early in the following year, and at once reopened the subject by a letter dated January 17, 1899. He had employed the interval to obtain as full and complete information on the points raised in the letter from the Colonial Office as was possible. He had despatched Sir Charles Metcalfe, the consulting engineer of the British South Africa Company, to inspect the proposed route of the line from Bulawayo as far north as the Zambesi, and he enclosed the report of this gentleman for the

information of the Government. Sir Charles Metcalfe considered it desirable that the first section northwards from Bulawayo should be extended from 200 to 250 miles, so as to permit its tapping the extensive coal deposits in the Mafungubusi district.

In addition to this inspection of the route, Sir Charles Metcalfe had made a detailed survey for the line from Bulawayo to Gwelo, a distance of 110 miles, and this survey was then being pushed forward beyond Gwelo. The engineer had satisfied himself that no special engineering difficulties would be encountered, and estimated that the average cost of construction per mile would not exceed £3500. According to this estimate the total cost of the construction of the whole 250-mile section would be £875,000, but for the sake of leaving a margin for contingencies Mr Rhodes took it at £900,000.

To raise this sum Rhodes proposed an issue at par of debentures redeemable at par, bearing interest at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; that the interest on the debentures, together with a further 1 per cent, in order to provide a sinking fund, should be guaranteed by the British South Africa Company for a period of $50\frac{3}{4}$ years; and that, in addition, a guarantee of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, required for interest and sinking fund, should be given by the Imperial Government. Under this proposal the whole of the debenture issue would be redeemed by the operation of the sinking fund within the period he had named.

As he had stated in his first letter, the security offered to holders of the proposed debentures would be a charge upon the whole of the assets and undertakings of the Bechuanaland Railway Company, after the rights of holders of the existing debentures issue

of £2,000,000 had been safeguarded. Subject to the existing debentures, therefore, the security offered would be—(a) that of the whole line of 587 miles from Vryburg to Bulawayo; (b) of the new section of 250 miles; (c) of the subsidies paid by the Imperial Government and the British South Africa Company, which then amounted to £30,000 per annum; and (d) of blocks of valuable land in Cape Colony of an aggregate area of approximately 8000 square miles.

In case the proposal outlined above did not meet with the approval of the Government, Mr Rhodes submitted the following alternative proposal: That the option of the Bechuanaland Railway Company to redeem the whole of its existing issue of £2,000,000 of 5 per cent debentures at £105 per cent should be exercised; that a fresh issue of £3,000,000 debentures, bearing interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, should be made. If this were done it would provide for (1) the £900,000 required for the construction of the new section of the line, and (2) the £2,100,000 required for the redemption of the existing £2,000,000 debenture issue at a premium of £5 per cent. Mr Rhodes further went on to suggest that a guarantee of interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and of the 1-per-cent sinking fund should be given by the British South Africa Company for a period of $50\frac{3}{4}$ years upon the whole £3,000,000 issue of debentures, and sinking fund to the same amount should be given by the Imperial Government.

Under this conversion scheme the security offered to the holders of the new debentures issue would be identical with that already described, but there would only be one class of debentures instead of two. Consequently, all holders of debentures would be equally

secured. As in the first scheme, the whole of the proposed issue of debentures would be redeemed by the operation of the sinking fund within the period named, $50\frac{3}{4}$ years. Power could be taken in the debenture trust-deed, Mr Rhodes pointed out, to make as required, with the approval of the Imperial Government, further issues of debentures ranking equally with the issue then proposed to be made.

Of the two schemes, Mr Rhodes considered that the second was the preferable, for from a financial point of view it was undesirable, in his opinion, that there should be different classes of debentures. His principal reason, however, for commending it to the favourable consideration of the Government was that a large annual saving could be effected by its adoption. As the matter then stood, the annual liability of the Bechuanaland Railway Company for interest at the rate of 5 per cent on its £2,000,000 issue of debentures was £100,000. Under the conversion scheme the annual liability for interest at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the whole £3,000,000 required would be only £75,000, or a clear saving to the railway company, through the use of the Imperial credit, of £25,000 per annum, with an addition of 250 miles of new line to its system.

With regard to the stipulation of the Colonial Secretary that the Cape Government should co-operate in the construction of the new line, Mr Rhodes was able to state that the Cape authorities had expressed their willingness not to charge more for the carriage of the materials required for the construction of the line than the actual cost.

On the receipt of this letter Mr Rhodes was informed unofficially by the Colonial Office that there

seemed to be certain difficulties in the way of the Government accepting either of the two proposals he had submitted, and therefore on March 27 he wrote another letter to the Colonial Office submitting a third suggestion.

This was as follows : That the Bechuanaland Railway Company's existing debenture issue of £2,000,000, bearing interest at the rate of 5 per cent per annum, should be paid off; that a new issue, at par, of debentures to the same amount, redeemable at par, bearing interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum, should be made upon the same security; and that in lieu of a guarantee of interest upon the capital to be raised for the extension, the Imperial Government should guarantee the interest upon that amount, and, in addition, a sinking fund charge at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The total liability to be undertaken under this scheme would thus be 3 per cent on £2,000,000, or £60,000 per annum.

If these conditions were accepted by the Government, the British South Africa Company was prepared to give a similar guarantee of interest and sinking fund charge, to which the guarantee which he proposed should be given by the Imperial Government would be additional. The Chartered Company was further prepared, in the event of the proposal being adopted, to deposit, for a term of years to be mutually agreed upon, the sum of £300,000 in Consols as an insurance against any possible shortfall in the receipts of the line.

If this proposal were accepted, Mr Rhodes was prepared to undertake on behalf of the Bechuanaland Railway Company--of which he was, of course, the moving spirit--to construct immediately, at its own

risk and without asking for any further guarantee in connection with the undertaking, the first section of the line from Bulawayo to the north at an approximate cost of £875,000, the total length of this section to be at least 200 miles.

The reply of the Colonial Office to these two letters of Rhodes was contained in a letter dated May 1. After recapitulating the terms of the three proposals he had submitted, the letter went on to say that the Imperial Government was not able to accept any one of them.

The main reasons for this were set out as follows : In the first place, the Imperial Government considered that, while they would incur a certain risk, no adequate financial advantage would accrue to them under any of the proposals. The line of railway, it was pointed out, which was the subject of the proposed guarantee in each case would in the end belong exclusively to the original shareholders of the Bechuanaland Railway Company, who subscribed an original capital of £6000. In the second place, there was no provision that the Cape Government should participate in the guarantee, though that Government was greatly interested in the matter, looking to the direct practical advantages which may be expected to accrue to the colony from the traffic which would flow between the north and the sea over its railway system.

In place of the three proposals Mr Rhodes had laid before the Government, Mr Chamberlain now suggested one on behalf of the Government for Mr Rhodes' acceptance. This was couched as follows :—

1. The Imperial Government to lend to the Bechuanaland Railway Company £2,100,000 for the redemp-

tion, at a premium of 5 per cent, of the existing issue of £2,000,000 5 per cent debentures.

2. Interest to be fixed at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent and sinking fund at $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.

3. Interest and sinking fund to be a first charge on the profits of the existing railway from Vryburg to Bulawayo, such profits including net earnings and the subsidies receivable from the Protectorate Government and the British South Africa Company.

4. No guarantee would be required from the British South Africa Company.

5. This arrangement to be conditional on a guarantee by the Cape Government to pay, for the period of the currency of the loan, one-third of any deficiency which might at any time exist in the annual payment of interest and sinking fund.

6. The ordinary shareholders of the Bechuanaland Railway Company to contract that at the expiry of the period of repayment, the railway from Vryburg to Bulawayo should become the joint-property of the Imperial Government and the Cape Government on payment to the shareholders of the sum of £100,000 by the respective Governments.

Rhodes' answer to this extraordinary proposal was very prompt, being dated May 9, and was, as was only to be expected, a polite, but none the less firm, refusal of the Government's offer. The paragraph of his letter showing his reasons for this was as follows:—

“ In regard to the provisional counter-proposal which is set forth in your letter under reply, I am in a position to state that the directors of the British South Africa Company, whilst recognising that in the event of the federation the railway might ultimately be vested in the Federal Government of South

Africa, and whilst prepared to agree that, in case federation should not be established, the reversion of the line might belong, on certain conditions, to her Majesty's Government and Rhodesia, are not disposed to accept the substitution of the Cape Colony for Rhodesia as the ultimate part-owner of the line. They also think that, in view of the present position of the British South Africa Company, its guarantee should be ample, and that there is no necessity to ask for a partial guarantee from the Cape Colony. The company has now in hand for administrative and other purposes a sum of £2,000,000. It has also raised during the last month for railway development a further sum of £3,000,000, and, in addition, the money for the extension of the line to Tanganyika is also now practically assured. Independently of the company the sum of about £2,000,000 has been raised lately by various mining companies for expenditure in Rhodesia, affording striking proof of the confidence of investors in its future.

"I think that, with these facts before them, the guarantee of the British South Africa Company should have been considered ample by her Majesty's Government without resort to the Cape Colony. I do not think that Rhodesia should place itself under an obligation to the Cape Colony by asking for a guarantee, with the risk of a refusal, which would place it and her Majesty's Government in an absolutely false position. Further, I am convinced that the participation of the Cape Colony in the undertaking would lead to many complications in the future, should federation of the various states of South Africa not be accomplished. The future is at present uncertain, and it

must be remembered that the question of the destination of the railway would only arise after sixty years, when the sinking fund would have redeemed the loan.

“I am further in a position to state that the financial objections to the scheme, from the point of view of the Bechuanaland Railway Company, Limited, are also vital. The board of that company points out that, under clause 8 of the proposal, all the profits of the line are to be devoted to its extension or improvement; that for sixty years the shareholders are to get no profits; and that after that time the whole of their rights are to be purchased for £100,000. As shares representing one-third of the share capital are in the hands of independent shareholders, at a present market value of £120,000, they are unable to understand on what grounds her Majesty’s Government expect the shareholders to consent to hand over their whole property after sixty years for £100,000, and to receive no profits in the mean time.”

There the negotiations ended: Rhodes had flung the grasping proposal of the Government in their teeth, and set about devising some other way of raising the necessary capital for the extension of his railway to the north without the assistance of the Imperial Government. To quote his own expression in a moment of not altogether inexcusable petulance, “Chamberlain wanted the earth, and he couldn’t have it.”

How he successfully raised the money he needed remains to be told in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

BEFORE THE WAR.

WHILE the negotiations with the Imperial Government which were dealt with in the previous chapter were going forward, Rhodes found time to carry out his long-cherished project of visiting Germany and Belgium. The object of this Continental visit was very intimately connected with the future of his trans-African railway and telegraph schemes. As we have seen, the junction of German East Africa and the Congo Free State immediately to the north of Lake Tanganyika effectively disposed of the dream of an "all-red" railway across Africa; and for Rhodes to join up his railway and telegraph systems with those of Egypt, it was necessary for him to traverse either German or Congo Free State territory. Which was it to be? This was the question which his visit to the Court of Berlin was to answer.

He tried Germany first, because those who had explored the land between Lake Tanganyika and Uganda told him that rather a better country was to be found on the German side of the frontier. His meeting with the Emperor William II. was interesting in the extreme, for in many respects they are the two most striking personalities of their times. The two

personages, the Kaiser and Mr Rhodes, who have much that is akin in their natures, were mutually attracted, and had several long and quite unofficial discussions. Mr Rhodes was enthusiastic in his admiration of the Emperor, and has set his impressions of him on record. "No wonder," he said to one of his friends when he returned from one of his visits to the royal palace—"no wonder that the Emperor makes a success of his life when he gives himself up so entirely to the task before him." The business capacity of William II., and his grasp of a subject down to its minutest details, made a great impression on Mr Rhodes, and he was somewhat surprised to find the Emperor manifesting a great admiration for Great Britain and for all things British.

The longest interview between the two ambitious empire-builders lasted for forty minutes, and at the end of that time Rhodes returned to his friends radiant with delight. "Yes," he said, "the Emperor has been most kind to me; he has treated me very well indeed. I am very glad I came to Berlin," he continued, "and I shall go away more than satisfied with what I have managed to accomplish." For some time, however, he would go no further than this, and refused to reveal to his friends what he had actually achieved. In the end, however, it appeared that Rhodes had, with his usual directness of speech and with his dislike for using two words where one would do, stated clearly what he hoped to obtain from Germany, and that the Kaiser, who had been equally direct in stating that Germany would assent to the railway and the telegraph lines passing through its colonies, pointed out that in return for doing so his Government would

require a substantial *quid pro quo*, and would demand a large share in the profits which accrued from the section of the lines which passed over German soil.

Mr Rhodes saw the reasonableness of this demand and assented to it, as he was, of course, bound to do: it was the price he had to pay for the short-sightedness of the British Ministry some years previously in neglecting to keep a route to the north open between the lakes and Uganda. He told his Majesty that his idea with regard to the portion of the telegraph-wire and railway line which was to pass through German East Africa was that it should be subordinate to German supervision and German industry, a proviso that did not at all prove to the liking of some of Mr Rhodes' ardent British supporters. They were not very pleased at the project of a portion of the line to be built with British money being practically under the domination of German officials, which was to be, as they put it, "used for exploiting German industry at the expense of the British." This was rather an extreme view to take of the situation, but there were certainly some grounds for the assumption.

When Mr Rhodes quitted Berlin he visited Amsterdam and The Hague. The British public, and more particularly, perhaps, the British press, were very curious to know the reason for this extension of Mr Rhodes' Continental tour. That is the worst of being an important personage. It is impossible to do the smallest and most trivial action without half the world speculating as to the ulterior motive for it. When a more than usually pushing journalist sought to draw Mr Rhodes as to his reason for his visit to Holland, that gentleman assumed his blandest smile, said

pleasantly, "Why I am going to The Hague? I will tell you—to look at the pictures there! Good-day," and with a bow and another smile left the journalist gazing helplessly after him.

On his return to England Rhodes immediately resumed his negotiations for the granting of a Government guarantee for the construction of the line, with the result that was described in the last chapter. On his return it was assumed, and Mr Rhodes' words seemed to justify this assumption, that he had definitely arranged with the German Government to carry both the railway and the telegraph through the colony of German East Africa. As a matter of fact, as after-events demonstrated, this was not the case. What was really decided upon was that the telegraph line should pass through German territory, the price to be paid being that at the end of forty years from the date of opening the line should become German property, and Germany would thereafter maintain the line. At the same time there could be no alteration in the rates for through messages. "It was a most just bargain," said Mr Rhodes, "on the part of the German Government, because the conduct of Europe is to levy blackmail in connection with every telegraph which passes through it." This may be so; but to the shareholders in the Trans-African Telegraph Company the price seemed a very heavy one to pay for permission to carry their line through what is practically a deserted country, far removed from the pale of white civilisation.

As regards the railway, this matter was left in abeyance; but Mr Rhodes was certainly of the opinion at this time that it would follow the telegraph-wire through German East Africa, and there is

small doubt that the German Emperor and his Government would have placed very little difficulty in the way of this being done. Subsequent events, however, have caused Mr Rhodes to change his plans in this direction. With the discovery of the valuable Wankie coalfields which lie to the north-west of Bulawayo, which promise to become a very valuable acquisition so soon as the advent of a railway permits of their being developed, Rhodes decided to divert his trans-continental line more to the west, so as to pass through this field, and therefore at the time of writing the chances are in favour of the line reaching Uganda and Egypt by way of the Congo Free State, though the terms for the building of this section of the line have yet to be settled.

On his return to London Mr Rhodes met Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, then Sirdar of the Egyptian army, whose acquaintance he had made when visiting Egypt at the beginning of 1899 to arrange with the Egyptian Government the details of the trans-African telegraph-wire, the tariff for messages, and other matters. There had long been a sympathy between these two, and when Lord Kitchener found that he was short of railway engines to enable him to push forward his campaign against the Khalifa, Rhodes promptly supplied the deficiency from the rolling-stock he had bought for the Rhodesian lines. In London the two men who at the opposite ends of the African continent have done so much for the British Empire spent much of their time together, and were to be seen nearly every morning riding side by side in the Row. It was during this visit to England that the University of Oxford presented Mr Rhodes with the honorary degree

of D.C.L. under the circumstances described in the early part of this book.

How Rhodes raised the money for building the next section of his railway line to the north, on the refusal of the Imperial Government to give him the guarantee he had asked for (save on such terms as absolutely prevented him from accepting it), now remains to be told. Despite this refusal of the Government, Rhodes was as determined as ever to push on with the construction of the line, though of course he would have to proceed more slowly than would have been the case if he had had the guarantee of the Imperial Government to assist him. The first step he took towards raising the necessary capital for carrying the line northwards from Bulawayo was to approach each of the Rhodesian mining and land companies which owned property in the neighbourhood of the route to be taken, and to invite them to take up debentures in the railway. The reply to this was eminently satisfactory, nearly half a million sterling being subscribed almost immediately. This was sufficient, on Mr Rhodes' estimate, to carry the line forward for a distance of 150 miles. This left about 750 miles of country to be crossed before the northern border of Rhodesia was reached. What Rhodes described as "flying surveys" of the country between Gwelo and Lake Tanganyika had been taken, and it was estimated that the cost of building this 750-mile section would be about £3,000,000.

The manner in which Rhodes proposed to raise this money was as follows: The Bechuanaland Railway Company was to obtain the money by the issue of 4 per cent debentures, the interest to be guaranteed by the British South Africa Company. As, however,

the line would only be built at the rate of 200 miles a-year at the very utmost, this sum was not required for four or five years. Instead, therefore, of issuing this sum all at once, and then having to let the greater part of it lie idle for some years in the vaults of the Bank of England, he proposed to issue £600,000 of debentures annually for five years. In order to illustrate the procedure he proposed to adopt with regard to these debentures, Mr Rhodes took the case of a person who bought £100 of these debentures. He would pay £20 down, and on this he would receive 4 per cent interest. The balance of his payment would be divided into four equal instalments spread over a period of five years.

This is perhaps one of the most notable financial schemes Mr Rhodes has ever inaugurated, and serves to illustrate his methods of grappling with a difficult problem. It is idle to pretend that Mr Rhodes could ever become a great financier, like the various members of the Rothschild family, or Mr Alfred Beit: he is too impetuous and impatient for that. The only method of dealing with a problem which finds favour in his eyes is to carve a path straight through it. "Cutting the Gordian knot" has become quite a hobby of Mr Rhodes in late years; and while this direct policy may not always be justified by events, it certainly is by far the most interesting policy from the point of view of the onlooker.

He is quite incapable of appreciating the niceties and subtleties of the delicate point in finance. He wants a certain sum of money. Good. How can he best raise it? That is how he puts the problem, and, brushing all questions of detail on one side, he proceeds to map out as tersely as possible the best means

of raising it. There is nothing, however, about his finance that can be called clumsy. He has an instinctive grasp of figures, and can manipulate and twist them about until he has obtained all that he requires with a skill that is really quite surprising. But Cecil Rhodes is essentially a man of action, and would never under any circumstances have become a financier pure and simple. Had he not taken up the attractive career of an empire-builder, he would in all probability have become an explorer or a soldier.

Having raised the money he needed for the building of a further 150 miles of his railway to the north, and arranged for raising the capital to continue the line as far as Lake Tanganyika, he returned to Africa in July to set on foot the plans he had matured.

When he arrived at Cape Town he found that the tension which had for long been springing up between the Imperial Government and the South African Republic had greatly increased, and that the spectre of war was already hovering over South Africa. With admirable tact and forethought he studiously held himself aloof from the negotiations which were proceeding between Mr Chamberlain and President Kruger. He pithily explained his reason for doing so: "I made a mistake with regard to the Transvaal once," he said, "and that is quite enough for me. A burnt child dreads the fire. I keep aloof from the whole Transvaal crisis, so that no one will be able to say, if things go wrong, 'That Rhodes is in it again!'"

Like most other people who were following events in the Transvaal at all closely at this time, Mr Rhodes did not believe that it would come to war between Great Britain and the Transvaal before the year was out. On the contrary, all his public and private

utterances during the summer of 1899 showed that he believed that President Kruger was once more playing a game of "bluff," and that so soon as the Transvaal President was convinced that the Imperial Government was resolute in the attitude it had taken up with regard to the redress of the many grievances under which the Uitlanders of Johannesburg and district suffered, he would "climb down" and agree to the terms proposed.

On his arrival at Cape Town on July 18 Mr Rhodes received an unprecedented welcome from the townspeople, who recognised in him the natural leader of the party of Reform and Progress in South Africa against the forces of retrogression and conservatism which were then rampant in the sub-continent. He remained a short time only in Cape Town, and proceeded almost immediately to his home in the suburbs. Wherever he halted *en route* to Groot Schuur, the same enthusiastic welcome awaited him. The history of his triumphal progress through the colony after the Jameson Raid was repeated, but on a somewhat greater scale. At the little town of Mowbray, for instance, the populace took the horses from his carriage and drew him in triumph to the drill hall, where he was forced to deliver a speech. This was the first occasion on which he had spoken during the time that the difficulties with the South African Republic were in progress.

After referring to his recent visit to England and the continent of Europe, and the results which he had achieved, he described the marvellous change which he had found among the great body of British people with regard to what has been termed "the expansionist party" in South Africa.

“ The people of England,” he said, “ are finding out that ‘ trade follows the flag,’ and they have all become Imperialists. They are not going to part with any territory, and the bygone ideas of ‘ nebulous’ republics are past. The English intend to retain every inch of land they have got, and perhaps to get a few inches more. When I began this business of annexation, both sides (Liberals and Conservatives) were most timid. They would ask one to stop at Kimberley, then they asked one to stop at Khama’s country. I remember,” he went on, “ Lord Salisbury’s chief secretary imploring me to stop at the Zambesi. Now they (*i.e.*, the people of England) won’t stop anywhere. They have found out that the world is not quite big enough for British trade and the British flag.”

While dealing with this subject of the revulsion of feeling among the people of Great Britain in favour of the “expansionist policy” in South Africa, it is interesting to recall a conversation between Mr Rhodes and Mr Gladstone which took place on this policy some years previously to the speech quoted above. The late Liberal leader took Mr Rhodes rather seriously to task for desiring to extend British responsibilities in South Africa. “ Mr Rhodes,” he said, “ we have quite enough. Our obligations are already far too great; but apart from the question of increasing our obligations, what advantage can you see to the British race in the acquisition of fresh territory?” Mr Rhodes at once accepted this challenge and replied to Mr Gladstone that the primary reason for the further acquisition of territory by Great Britain—and this applied not merely to South Africa but all over the world—was that so soon as every

Power in the world, even including the people of the United States, acquired any extension of territory, the first thing they did was to place a hostile tariff on British-made goods. He further pointed out that it was necessary to bear in mind that Great Britain is a very small island, not nearly so large as France, and that she does not possess a continent as does the United States. Great Britain's position, Mr Rhodes impressed upon the great statesman, depends on her trade, and if the people of the United Kingdom did not found and develop new dependencies all over the world in countries well suited to white colonisation, but at present occupied by barbarian native races, they would soon find themselves shut off from the trade of the world. The question of tariffs, Mr Rhodes continued, as he warmed to his subject and found that he had an interested auditor in Mr Gladstone, "is not with our opponents so much a question of revenue as a desire to exclude absolutely Great Britain from trading with their colonies."

Mr Gladstone, as has been said, listened very carefully to what Mr Rhodes had to say, but declined to accept his view of the question. He held that though other countries might temporarily diverge from the right path, yet in the end they would see the error of their ways, and the principles of Free Trade would prevail ultimately.

Mr Rhodes demurred vigorously from this. "No, Mr Gladstone," he said. "In logic you are all right; but when it comes to practice you will find that you are all wrong. You will see that as each new country is opened up the possessing Power will immediately establish a prohibitive tariff against British-made goods. Now England absolutely depends for her

prosperity and her continued existence upon her working up of raw goods and distributing them to the world at large. If the markets of the world are shut against us, and we have neglected our opportunities to acquire colonies of our own beyond the seas, where shall we be then?"

Mr Gladstone was forced to admit that if such a contingency did arrive, if in every new colony which was acquired by a foreign Power hostile tariffs were put in force against us, it would be a very black outlook. He pinned his faith, however, on the principles of Free Trade, which he believed were bound to prevail in the long-run; and so the argument ended, in each of the two being the better for the discussion, but holding to their several opinions with greater tenacity than ever.

In a speech at Cape Town, subsequent to the one in the drill hall at Mowbray to which reference has been made, Mr Rhodes referred to this conversation with Mr Gladstone, and emphasised the fact that the principles of Free Trade on which the deceased statesman had laid so much stress had not prevailed in the past, and showed very little probability of prevailing in the future. As an instance of this he cited Madagascar. When France took that island, Mr Rhodes pointed out, there were certain treaties in connection with it which provided for equality in trade, or, in other and more familiar words, the policy of the "open door" was in operation. This was allowed on the basis of the island being regarded as a protectorate. So soon, however, as France annexed it, the French tariff was directly hostile to the importation of British goods. The Imperial Government, as Mr Rhodes reminded his audience, continually remonstrated with France

on the subject of this tariff, but without avail. The policy of the French was—and we can scarcely blame them for adopting it—that as they had been at the trouble and expense of conquering Madagascar, they and they alone should have all the benefit in the way of trade and commerce which accrued from such conquest. “We have spent millions in taking the island,” the French Government said in effect, “and we are going to keep all the good that comes out of it for ourselves.”

Before he ended this speech at Cape Town in which he referred to Madagascar as evidence of what Great Britain might—and probably would—have to contend against in the way of hostile tariffs when a foreign Power opened up a new colony, Mr Rhodes related an amusing anecdote, of which the principal figure was Sir William Harcourt. That gentleman, who for long has been one of the chief, and certainly one of the fairest, opponents of Mr Rhodes’ Cape to Cairo railway project, had a year or two previously, at the general election of 1895, been defeated in Derby largely on the Imperialist question, his successful opponent being Mr Drage, who at that time was the chairman of the South African Association. Sir William, however, was elected as a member for West Monmouth, a constituency which included several large manufactories, ironworks, and what not; and the first time he visited one of the largest ironworks in the district (controlled, by the way, by one of his principal supporters), he found by the irony of fate that the workers were engaged on a large order for rails for the very Cape to Cairo line that he had been so persistent in denouncing as being of no service whatever to the country! As Mr Rhodes remarked with a sly chuckle when he

related the story, it was an amusing little incident, but one which contained a lesson for those who had recklessly denounced the Cape to Cairo railway as a “wild-cat” scheme which would never do the least good to anybody.

A very interesting feature of this speech was the reference to the Transvaal which Mr Rhodes permitted himself to make. As it shows more clearly than pages of matter written by an outside party could, what his views were on the prospect of war between the Boer republic and this country at this time, July 1899, no apology is necessary for giving it here in detail.

“The notion of the Transvaal being able to trouble Great Britain at all seriously is,” he said, “too ridiculous. I always think that President Kruger must be very proud of himself. I should feel alarmed if I heard that the Czar was going to Peking, or that the French were moving in Newfoundland or in the Niger territories, or were quarrelling over the Fashoda settlement; but when I am told that the president of the Transvaal is causing trouble, I cannot really think about it. It is too ridiculous. If you were to tell me that the native chief in Samoa was going to cause trouble to the Imperial Government, then I would discuss the proposition that the Transvaal was a danger to the British Empire.”

Yet three months afterwards Kruger had flung down the gauntlet to the Empire, and his semi-civilised Burghers were able for over two years to defy all the force that the Empire could bring against them. This speech demonstrates that the general estimate, that a war with the South African Republic would be little more than a procession to Pretoria, had

a supporter in one so prominently connected with the inner ring of South African politics as Cecil Rhodes. Those who recall to mind the manner in which the nation, and indeed the whole Empire, seemed to reel under the successive reverses of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso, will see that it was quite possible for one so impotent in Mr Rhodes' eyes as President Kruger to constitute, temporarily at any rate, "a danger to the Empire." It is the height of unwisdom, as this country has been taught by many severe lessons in the past, to hold a possible opponent too cheaply.

In a subsequent portion of his speech Mr Rhodes declared most emphatically that war in South Africa would not come about. "There is not the slightest chance of war," he said; "but the Imperial Government are going to get the terms which are demanded as being fair and right to the Uitlanders." This was the opinion shared by nineteen people out of every twenty who were following the course of events in the Transvaal in the summer of 1899. A very rude awakening was in store for them.

Such, then, was Rhodes' view of the situation three months previous to the outbreak of the war with the Transvaal. Down to the eve of Kruger's insulting ultimatum he believed that there would be peace, and that a satisfactory settlement would be arrived at even at the eleventh hour. This being so, he did what little he was able to bring about this settlement. So that his presence should not needlessly irritate President Kruger and his advisers, he voluntarily retired into the background and effaced himself as much as was possible, and, on the rare occasions that he was called upon to speak, carefully avoided any but the most casual reference to the crisis which had

arisen in South African affairs. Indeed the short extract given above contains the only reference of any length at all to the possibility of war.

When, however, war was actually declared on Great Britain by the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State threw in its lot with the sister republic, Rhodes felt that there was no longer any need for him to remain inactive ; and having a strong desire to be as near the fighting line as possible, and in view of the enormous interests he had in Kimberley, he set off at once for that city, in order to be at hand to take such steps as were possible for the protection of the diamond mines, which, he guessed instinctively, would be one of the first objectives of the commandoes of the allied Boer republics. He was fortunate enough to reach Kimberley by use of the last train, to enter the town before the commencement of the siege, and after he had very narrowly escaped capture at the hands of the enemy.

CHAPTER XXII.

RHODES BESIEGED IN KIMBERLEY.

THE Boers soon heard that Rhodes had arrived in Kimberley from the south, and at once made great preparations to lay siege to that town and to capture it and its inhabitants at almost any cost. So great was their vindictive hatred of Mr Rhodes that it is no exaggeration to say that they would sooner have taken him prisoner than have annihilated the entire British army and have entered the streets of Cape Town. That they were disappointed, and that the iron cage they had built in which to imprison Mr Rhodes and to exhibit him publicly through the two Boer states was never destined to be filled in this way, are now matters of history, but it was certainly not for want of trying.

So soon as Mr Rhodes arrived in the town he took up his residence at a pretty little sanatorium which stands in the pleasant suburb of Beaconsfield, and there he remained during the whole of the siege. Almost immediately, and with his customary impetuosity, he set about doing all that lay in his power to add to the defences of the town and to aid the military authorities. The only regular troops in Kimberley were half a battalion, about 500 strong, of the

gallant Loyal North Lancashire Regiment under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel R. G. Kekewich of that regiment; a battery of Royal Field Artillery, about 70 strong, with six 7-pounder guns, and 50 men of the Royal Engineers. There was also the volunteer force known as the Diamond-Fields Artillery, numbering about 70 men, with six field-guns and a Maxim detachment, and the Diamond-Fields Light Horse, another volunteer force, about 150 strong.

In order to provide more men for garrisoning the town, Rhodes quickly set about organising a new force, called the Kimberley Light Horse, paying all the expenses in connection with the raising and equipment of it out of his own pocket. Recruits for this corps were quickly forthcoming in considerable numbers, and it soon had a strength of over 300 men. A very useful contingent was that of 300 men of the Cape Mounted Police. Another corps which was raised and armed as the siege proceeded was the Kimberley Rifles, composed of nearly 400 men; while as a last line of defence every able-bodied man was called upon to enrol himself in the town-guard, which soon had nearly 3000 men on its roll. In all, the garrison of Kimberley amounted to about 4500 men, of whom only about 700 were regulars.

Throughout the siege of Kimberley the Boers were wonderfully well supplied with information regarding all that transpired in the town, and from the persistent way in which their heavy siege ordnance was day by day trained on to the sanatorium it was obvious that they knew that that was where Rhodes was living. Strangely enough, though the Boer shells did much damage in other parts of the town, the

sanatorium escaped without much injury. Rhodes himself seemed to bear a charmed life. He displayed his customary disregard of danger. Although barricades were erected at every point of egress from the town, and the inhabitants were not allowed to pass these barricades without special permits signed by the commanding officer, Rhodes day after day would ride for considerable distances outside the barricades on the open veldt entirely alone, or accompanied only by one or two of the more venturesome of his friends. This was done in no spirit of idle bravado, but simply because his impatient temperament chafed under the confinement of the town, and he preferred to run the risk of being "sniped" by a Boer sharpshooter.

During these hazardous rides Mr Rhodes disdained to take even the elementary precaution of donning clothes which might render him less conspicuous than usual. On the contrary, he adhered to his favourite up-country costume of a light-grey coat, a light-coloured felt slouch hat, and a pair of white flannel trousers. Indeed a better target for the Boer marks-men could not have been imagined; yet he escaped without a scratch, though at times he had some narrow shaves from both shell- and rifle-fire.

Referring to the way in which Mr Rhodes passed backwards and forwards through the barricades, he one day had an amusing and at the same time an instructive experience. As has just been said, it soon became obvious that there were people in the town who were engaged in systematically supplying the enemy with information of all that was going on, and many complaints were made as to the free-and-easy manner in which persons could leave the town for an unknown destination and return to it at their own

freewill and without any interference from the military guards. In order to test the truth of these statements Mr Rhodes one morning rode up to one of the barricades and attempted to pass through without showing his permit. The sentry at once raised his rifle and stopped him. Rhodes reined in in well-assumed surprise, and told the man to let him pass. The soldier stood his ground and declined to let him proceed until he produced his pass. "But I am Cecil Rhodes," said that gentleman, adopting a tone of great indignation. "I know that," cheerfully responded the soldier, "but I must see a pass before you go out here, whoever you are." At this point Rhodes burst into a hearty fit of laughter and produced his permit, commanding as he did so the conduct of the sentry.

In many ways, besides raising the Kimberley Light Horse, Mr Rhodes assisted the military authorities of the town. The native population, for instance, who under ordinary conditions worked in the diamond mines, found that on the commencement of the war their occupation was gone, and many of the lower-class whites were in the same predicament. With the assent of the De Beers Company Mr Rhodes organised relief works for these unemployed, by setting them to make up the roads of a newly formed portion of the town, and by so doing not only relieved the military authorities of the great responsibility of having a large unemployed population to keep in hand, but was the means of providing many thousands of men, both natives and Europeans, with the wherewithal to keep body and soul together. Incidentally these relief works considerably improved and beautified a portion of the town which previously had been

rather uninviting. To the chief of the roads so built the highly appropriate name of "Siege Avenue" was given.

It would be tedious and out of place here to record the events of the prolonged siege, and the efforts of Lord Methuen's column to reach Kimberley; therefore only those events which directly concerned Mr Rhodes, or in which he played a leading part, will be recorded. Much has been made, since the termination of the siege, of friction on more than one occasion between Mr Rhodes and the military authorities. How these difficulties arose is not very clear, but it may be taken for granted that both sides were somewhat to blame.

Mr Rhodes, as I have had occasion to remark previously, is impatient of control, and some of the military regulations which Colonel Kekewich had occasion to issue during the progress of the siege, though no doubt they were absolutely imperative from a military standpoint, seemed to Rhodes unnecessary and irritating. More than once he came into open conflict with the commander of the forces in the town. Such a state of things was very unfortunate, and probably no one now regrets that it existed at such a critical time more than Rhodes himself.

So strained were the relations at times between the military forces in Kimberley and Mr Rhodes and the party who, quite independently of him and in direct opposition to his wishes, chose to follow him, that more than one prominent personage present in the town during the siege has declared since that it would have been far better had Rhodes remained in Cape Town and never thrown himself into Kimberley. It is readily admitted on all hands that Rhodes in his own way

did much to lessen the inevitable privations of the siege and to alleviate the sufferings of the poorer sections of the residents; but in the eyes of many all the good he did was more than counterbalanced by his fractious and, as it appeared in the eyes of outsiders, unreasonable opposition to the dictates of Colonel Kekewich and his staff. In time of war it is an axiom that every other interest must at any cost be sacrificed to military considerations, and while probably Mr Rhodes' well-balanced mind enables him to see this and to admit it as an academic truth, yet, when it became a personal question, he chose, as the weight of evidence clearly shows, to ignore it. It is an unfortunate truth that on several occasions a kink in Mr Rhodes' mental organism has led him to regard himself, so far as is possible for a careful student of the man and his actions to judge, as being above the rules which should, and which do, control the movements of an ordinary individual. It is this curious blend of character which makes Mr Rhodes one of the most fascinating personages for a psychologist and a student of human nature to analyse.

In placing himself in a condition of opposition to the military authorities in Kimberley, it is safe to say that Mr Rhodes thought he was acting for the best: such will be conceded by all; but the mistake lay in not recognising that it was Colonel Kekewich, and not himself, who had been selected by the Empire, through its representatives, to defend Kimberley against the Boers. He ought to have cheerfully accepted things as he found them, and contented himself for once in a way with playing second fiddle. Such a position would have had, at any rate, the charm of novelty.

It was largely through the initiation of Mr Rhodes that the workmen in the De Beers factory turned their attention, first, to the manufacture of shells, and then to the turning out of the siege-gun, to which they gave the appropriate names of "Long Cecil" and "St Cecilia." Needless to say, both shells and gun were rather crude in make, and were wanting in finish when compared with those turned out in the arsenals in England; but they served their purpose almost, if not quite, as well as though they had been made by the latest and most improved machinery under the personal supervision of a committee of experts.

The shells made in the De Beers engineering shops were 7-pounders for the field-guns of the garrison, and proved very useful. The building of the gun was a much bigger undertaking, and one in which Mr Rhodes, in common with every one else in the town, took a very keen interest. The designer of the weapon was the chief engineer of the De Beers Company, Mr Labrum, an American of great fertility of idea and resource, and his material was an ingot of steel $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. This gentleman had had no previous experience of manufacturing artillery, but armed with a file of engineering journals and all the books on gunnery on which he could lay his hands, and assisted by the advice of such artillery officers as were in Kimberley, he commenced his task with confidence. His idea was to manufacture a 4·1 gun which should fire a 28-pounder shell, and thus enable the garrison to cope with the galling fire to which they were subjected from the heavy siege-guns which the Boers had mounted round the town.

After twenty-four days of incessant labour, the gun,

which had several original points about it which would probably not commend themselves to the artillery experts of the War Office, was finished, and mounted on a field-carriage. When the weapon came to be tested it was found to possess an effective range of 8000 yards, and its first shot proved a great surprise to the enemy, who, having by this time become thoroughly acquainted with the range of all the small field-guns in the town, were at a loss for a long time to understand where this new weapon of large calibre had come from. In all “Long Cecil” (to give it its most popular name) fired 255 shells during the siege, and it is now preserved in Kimberley as an interesting memento of the dark days through which the town passed.

By the irony of fate Mr Labrum, who had made this gun, was killed instantaneously by a shell which burst in his room at the Grand Hotel—one of the last shells fired into the town before the enemy gave way in front of the irresistible advance of General French’s cavalry column.

On all the shells manufactured in the De Beers shops was humorously stamped, “With C. J. R.’s compliments”—a very fair retort to the threats of the Boers to convey Mr Rhodes in a cage to Pretoria so soon as they laid hands on him.

Rhodes was also of considerable assistance to the authorities in the latter stages of the siege, when the food-supply began to run short, by organising at his own expense a system of soup distribution supplementary to the rations issued by the military. The rigours of the siege were greatly lessened by it.

It is necessary to refer to another point. Mr Rhodes is said to have made efforts to force the

hand of Lord Roberts in the matter of sending a relief force to the town, and Mr Rhodes has even been accused in certain quarters of valuing his own safety more than the ultimate victory of the British forces. This is, of course, absurd, for Rhodes is not a coward, and fear for himself never enters his calculations. But as the days went on, and the privations of the people in Kimberley became more and more severe, and there seemed to be no effort whatever on the part of the military forces to relieve the town, Rhodes undoubtedly became impatient, and chafed at what he considered to be the unnecessary delay and the callous neglect of the besieged town by the army. Lord Methuen with his column was sitting in a state of "masterful inactivity" before the Boer trenches of Magersfontein, and seemed as though he had made up his mind never to move again; while as the troops from home kept pouring into Cape Town, they were promptly sent round to help to swell General Buller's army in Natal.

All this time food in Kimberley was getting scarcer and scarcer, and the mortality, especially among the young children, was growing higher every week. The Boer bombardment, too, was increasing in strength daily, until the town promised to become soon nothing more than a heap of ruins. Under these circumstances it is not altogether surprising that the civil population of the town began to murmur at the delay in the despatch of a relief force, or that Mr Rhodes was prominently identified with this group; though it must be said that he would have shown better judgment had he exerted his influence to suppress the growing discontent, and to strengthen the hands of the military.

However, Mr Rhodes chose deliberately to act as the spokesman of the civilian portion of the besieged community, and as such, in conjunction with the Mayor of Kimberley, Mr H. A. Oliver, towards the end of January 1900 he despatched an earnest appeal to Lord Roberts to effect an early relief of the town, pointing out that the defenders could not resist the Boer attacks indefinitely. The history of all wars goes to show that there is ever a tendency for persons to exaggerate the importance of the operations in the particular district in which those persons happen to reside, and, needless to say, such a message as the one from Kimberley was not allowed by Lord Roberts to influence him in the plan of campaign he was then engaged in organising, though it showed him that Kimberley was approaching the end of its resources.

On February 7 a new bombardment of the town was inaugurated by the Boers, who had brought up several weapons of heavier calibre than those previously in use; and especially galling was a 6-inch gun throwing a 100-lb. shell. This bombardment lasted for three days, at the end of which time Mr Rhodes, after a long consultation with the mayor and other prominent civilian officials, drew up the following message, which he requested Colonel Kekewich to forward to Lord Roberts:—

KIMBERLEY, *February 10, 1900.*

“On behalf of the inhabitants of this town we respectfully desire to be informed whether there is an intention on your part to make an immediate effort for our relief. Your troops have been for more than two months within a distance of little over twenty miles from Kimberley, and if the Spyfontein hills are

too strong for them there is an easy approach over a level flat. This town, with a population of over 45,000 people, has been besieged for 120 days, and a large portion of the inhabitants has been enduring great hardships. Scurvy is rampant among the natives; children, owing to the lack of proper food, are dying in great numbers, and dysentery and typhoid are very prevalent. The chief foods of the whites have been bread and horse-flesh for a long time past, and of the blacks meat and malt only. These hardships, we think you will agree, have been borne patiently and without complaint by the people. During the last few days the enemy have brought into action, from a position within three miles of us, a 6-inch gun, throwing a 100-lb. shell, which is setting fire to our buildings, and is daily causing death among the population. As you are aware, the military guns here are totally inadequate to cope with this new gun. The only weapon which gives any help is one of local manufacture. Under these circumstances, as representing this community, we feel that we are justified in asking whether you have any immediate intention of instructing your troops to advance to our relief. We understand that large reinforcements have recently arrived in Cape Town, and we feel sure that your men at Modder River have at the outside 10,000 Boers opposed to them. You must be the judge as to what number of British troops would be required to deal with this body of men, but it is absolutely necessary that relief should be afforded to this place."

Whether this was a letter which should ever have been drafted by the civilian element of a besieged town for transmission to the Commander-in-Chief is

open to very grave doubt, and it has to be borne in mind that the person to whom Lord Roberts looked for guidance and information as to the real condition of Kimberley was not Mr Rhodes, nor yet the mayor, but Colonel Kekewich.

Acting quite within his rights, Colonel Kekewich, who by this time was no longer on speaking terms with Mr Rhodes, declined to transmit this letter to Lord Roberts. This friction between the military and civilian elements in Kimberley was most unfortunate, and ultimately led up to a serious misunderstanding over this message of Mr Rhodes. Colonel Kekewich, with the weight of the conduct of the defence of the town on his shoulders, had but little time to devote to the matter personally, with the result that a distorted version was transmitted to the Commander-in-Chief, in which it was stated that Mr Rhodes was anxious to surrender the town to the Boers if it was not speedily relieved. Of course this was not in the least what Mr Rhodes desired to say, and he protested very strongly against this version. Leaving on one side all other questions, Mr Rhodes' fate, so soon as the Boers had him in their power, was not one which would have led him to contemplate the fall of Kimberley with any degree of equanimity.

This hashed message, moreover, had the regrettable effect of procuring a stern official rebuke for Mr Rhodes from Lord Roberts. In his reply to this much distorted version of what Mr Rhodes really desired to say, the British Commander-in-Chief wrote as follows: "I beg of you to represent to the mayor and to Mr Rhodes as strongly as you possibly can the disastrous and humiliating effects of surrender after so prolonged and glorious a defence. Many days cannot possibly

pass before Kimberley will be relieved, as we commence active operations to-morrow. Future military operations depend in a large measure on your maintaining your position a very short time longer."

Rhodes had of course entered a vigorous protest against the misrepresentation to which his attitude had been subjected, but on the receipt of this reassuring message from Lord Roberts he urged that the latter part of it should be published broadcast over the town, so that the inhabitants might learn that their sufferings were not likely to be much further prolonged.

As a further precaution against danger from the shells of the Boer 100-pounder, Mr Rhodes decided on a step that he had long been contemplating, and threw open the diamond mines for the reception of all those who were nervous of remaining above ground. The lower levels of these mines are lighted throughout by electric glow-lamps, and for the greater part are perfectly dry.

Accordingly, the following notice was roughly painted on a board and publicly exhibited in the town :—

"I recommend women and children who desire complete shelter to proceed to Kimberley and De Beers shafts. They will be lowered at once into the mines from 8 o'clock throughout the night. Lamps and guides will be provided. C. J. RHODES."

This offer was at once taken advantage of, and during this night more than 1500 persons were lowered into the De Beers mine, while another thousand or so went down the Kimberley shaft. Mr Rhodes' original

idea was that the women and children should remain down the mines during the period of the bombardment and return to their houses during the night, but the great majority preferred to remain below ground altogether, and soon quite an underground colony had sprung up in the diamond mines.

Lord Roberts was quite as good as his word, and by a series of brilliant forced marches, which have been so often described of late, General French at the head of a mobile cavalry column effected the relief of Kimberley on February 15, amid a scene of delirious joy on the part of the inhabitants of the town. That evening, in order to celebrate the relief in characteristic British fashion, Mr Rhodes entertained General French and his staff at a dinner of such luxuries as the impoverished state of the town could provide.

So soon as railway communication with the south was re-established, Mr Rhodes returned to Groot Schuur to recuperate after the effects of the siege, and thus ended his active interest in the war ; though, needless to say, down to the final close of hostilities he followed events with the closest possible interest.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RHODES' GIFT TO THE LIBERAL PARTY.

IN the ninth chapter of the present book Mr Rhodes' handsome donation of £10,000 to the funds of the Nationalist party was dealt with, and it now remains to discuss the conditions under which the sum of £5000 was given to the Liberal party, around which so much controversy has raged of late. It was in 1890 that this latter gift to the funds of the Liberal party was first conceived. In that year Mr Schnadhorst, at that time the chief wirepuller of the Liberal caucus, was visiting South Africa for the benefit of his health, and while in Kimberley obtained an introduction to Mr Rhodes.

At this time it seemed evident to all in the inner ring of politics in England that a general election was not very far off, and the Liberal party was in dire straits financially. Mr Schnadhorst, of course, was perfectly aware of the munificent gift to the Irish party two years previously, and it occurred to him that Mr Rhodes, who made no secret of his strong Liberal leanings, might be induced to subscribe substantially to the party funds.

Therefore he set about sounding Mr Rhodes on the matter, at first delicately, and then, as he met with

no repulse, more boldly. Whatever Mr Schnadhorst's real politics may have been, he at any rate gave Mr Rhodes the impression that he was at one with him on the question of the cultivation and the strengthening of the bonds which bind together the Colonies and the mother-land. In other words, while he was in Kimberley Mr Schnadhorst posed, no doubt with perfect sincerity, as what we should call to-day a Liberal Imperialist.

Mr Rhodes has always been glad to meet and converse with those who are in the inner counsels of the political leaders at home, and therefore he spent some considerable time in the society of Mr Schnadhorst, who returned to England about the end of 1890. Mr Rhodes, it happened, quickly followed him. At the beginning of 1891 Mr Schnadhorst called on Rhodes at his hotel in London and renewed his suggestion that he should show his support of the Liberal party in some tangible form.

At first Rhodes was dubious. As he has himself told us, he is a staunch Liberal in most things, but with him it is Liberalism plus Empire. This being so, he was not at all anxious to provide a party with the sinews of war for the purpose of the dismemberment of the Empire. There were two things regarding which Rhodes was not certain as to the attitude of the Liberal party. The first was the old question of the retention of a certain proportion of the Irish members at Westminster in any future Home Rule bill which Mr Gladstone might introduce; and, second, there was the position of the party towards Egypt. By this time Mr Rhodes' trans-African telegraph-wire was well on its way across South Africa to the north, and this alone would have made him anxious that

British rule should continue on the banks of the Nile.

But he had other and higher motives for supporting the upholding of the supremacy of Great Britain in Egypt. He could see, as all other impartial observers could see, that if the British control of Egypt were withdrawn and Lord Cromer were recalled from Cairo, it would not be long before France proclaimed a protectorate over the country, and thus seriously menace the trade-route to India. In these circumstances it is small wonder that Rhodes hesitated before he responded to Mr Schnadhorst's blandishments.

When the two met to discuss the question, Mr Rhodes at once inquired what Mr Gladstone's position was with regard to the abandonment or retention of Egypt. On this head Mr Schnadhorst at first could give him no satisfactory assurance. He promised, however, to consult Mr Gladstone on the subject, and to let Rhodes know the result. Whether Mr Schnadhorst actually did consult Mr Gladstone is now open to grave doubt, and it would seem from the subsequent attitude of the great Liberal leader that he knew nothing whatever about either Mr Rhodes' contribution to the funds of the party or the conditions attached to it.

Be this as it may, certainly Mr Schnadhorst at a subsequent interview led Mr Rhodes to believe that his leader had definitely made up his mind that the British control of Egypt was to be continued. Thereupon Rhodes' scruples were entirely removed, and he wrote the following letter to Mr Schnadhorst:—

“February 23, 1891.

“MY DEAR SCHNADHORST,—I enclose you a cheque for £5000, and I hope you will, with the extreme

caution that is necessary, help in guiding your party to consider politics other than England.

“I do not think your visit to Kimberley did you harm, either physically or politically, and I am glad to send you the contribution I promised. The future of England must be Liberal, perhaps to fight Socialism. I make but two conditions ; please honourably observe them : (1) That my contribution is secret (if, of course, you feel in honour bound to tell Mr Gladstone, you can do so, but no one else, and he must treat it as confidential) ; (2) If the exigencies of party necessitate a Home Rule bill without representation at Westminster, your Association must return my cheque.—Yours, &c.,

C. J. RHODES.

“P.S.—I am horrified by Morley’s speech on Egypt. If you think your party hopeless, keep the money, but give it to some charity you approve of. It would be an awful thing to give my money to breaking up the Empire.”

In the light of later events this letter seems unfortunately rather loosely worded. As has been said, Mr Rhodes is an extremely careless correspondent. Looking at the letter without bias, however, two things are very clear: first, that if a Home Rule bill was introduced which did not provide for the retention of a certain number of Irish members at Westminster, the money was to be returned ; while the postscript makes it plain what Rhodes’ position was towards the “policy of scuttle” in Egypt, of which Mr John Morley was at that time one of the most prominent supporters.

Cecil Rhodes is not the sort of man to give away

large sums of money without the hope of gaining something in return, and the something he wanted in this instance was the retention of the control over Egypt by this country. On the other hand, Mr Schnadhorst was too astute a party henchman to think of returning a cheque of these dimensions without making some outward show of complying with its conditions. It is not a pleasant picture, it must be admitted, this bargaining for the observance of a certain line of conduct by one of the great parties of our political constitution, and this eager, grasping anxiety of the party wirepuller to finger the millionaire's gold.

In November 1891 Mr Gladstone made an important speech, in which he stated that "he wished Lord Salisbury would take some step which would relieve the country from the burdensome and embarrassing occupation of Egypt." Rhodes was in South Africa when he read this speech, and to say that he was astounded by it would be a mild way of expressing his feelings. He had received from Mr Schnadhorst what, rightly or wrongly, he believed to be a complete assurance that the abandonment of British rule in Egypt no longer formed a plank in the Liberal platform, and that Mr Gladstone had definitely made up his mind that the occupation must go on. Yet in this speech the Liberal leader was urging upon the Government of the day that the time had come when the British troops should no longer remain at Cairo.

At the earliest possible moment Rhodes wrote a letter to Mr Schnadhorst to discover what was the real meaning of what he then regarded as a sudden and inexplicable *volte-face* on the part of Mr

Gladstone. This letter was couched in the following terms :—

*“On board the DUNNOTTAR CASTLE,
April 25, 1892.*

“MY DEAR SCHNADHORST,—I am sorry to have missed you, but glad to hear that you are so much better, though it robs one of the chance of seeing you again in South Africa.

“I gather in England that your party is almost certain to come in, though there may be subsequent difficulty as to the shape of the Home Rule bill.

“The matter that is troubling me most is your policy in Egypt. I was horrified when I returned from Mashonaland to read a speech of Mr Gladstone’s evidently foreshadowing a scuttle if he came in. I could hardly believe it to be true, and sat down to write to you, but thought it better to wait and see you. I have now missed you, so must trust to writing. I do hope you will do your best to check him from the mad step, which must bring ruin and misery on the whole of Egypt, whilst our retirement will undoubtedly bring it under the influence of one or other of the foreign Powers, which of course by reciprocal treaties will eventually manage the exclusion of our trade. However, if your respected leader remains obdurate when he comes into power, and adopts this policy of scuttle, I shall certainly call upon you to devote my subscription to some public charity in the terms of my letter to you, as I certainly, though a Liberal, did not subscribe to your party to assist in the one thing that I hate above everything—namely, the policy of disintegrating and breaking up our Empire.

“As you are aware, the question of Egypt was the

only condition I made, and it seems rather extraordinary to me that the first public speech your leader should make, which sketches generally his views upon the near approach of office, should declare a policy of abandonment.

“I asked you at the time I wrote to see him and tell him of my action, and I suppose you must have mentioned to him the Egyptian question, which was really all I cared about.

“We are now one-third of the way with a telegraph through the continent from the south, only to hear of your policy of scuttle in the north.—Yours, &c.,

“C. J. RHODES.

“P.S.—I have to send this to be posted in England, as I have forgotten your direction.”

As Mr Rhodes had mislaid Mr Schnadhorst's address in London, he was forced to have recourse to a third party in order to get the letter forwarded; this third party was Mr W. T. Stead. To this last-named gentleman Mr Rhodes forwarded the following covering note:—

“*On board the DUNNOTTAR CASTLE,*
April 25, 1892.

“MY DEAR STEAD,—Kindly, after closing up, post the enclosed. I shall wait with anxiety the reply. I would send it direct, but do not know the address.

“Read and copy.—Yours, &c. C. J. RHODES.”

Mr Stead apparently at once recognised that Mr Schnadhorst had, knowingly or unknowingly, deceived Mr Rhodes, and that there were no real grounds for the wirepuller's promise that the abandonment of Egypt

should no longer be thought of by the Liberal party, for he at once wrote to Mr Rhodes as follows:—

“May 6, 1892.

“DEAR MR RHODES,—I received your letter for Schnadhorst, and duly forwarded it to him. I think the fault lies with Mr Schnadhorst, and not with Mr Gladstone. I was writing to Mr Gladstone about something else, and incidentally mentioned that you were very indignant with several speeches about Egypt; whereupon Mr Gladstone wrote asking me what those speeches were to which Mr Rhodes took exception, as he had not the pleasure of knowing what Mr Rhodes' views were concerning Egypt. From this I infer that Mr Schnadhorst has never informed Mr Gladstone of anything you said to him, in which case he deserves the bad quarter of an hour he will have after receiving your letter. . . . I saw Mr Balfour the other day, who said he did not think the difficulty with Egypt was with Mr Gladstone, but rather with Sir William Harcourt, who believed in the curtailment of the British Empire if he believed in nothing else. Balfour was very sorry that he had not a chance of seeing you when you were here, as he had looked forward to your coming in the hope of making your acquaintance.—I am, yours very truly,

“W. T. STEAD.”

When Mr Schnadhorst received Rhodes' letter he, as Mr Stead anticipated, experienced a very bad quarter of an hour indeed, and in his subsequent reply to Rhodes' letter endeavoured to evade the point raised therein by saying that the only two conditions Rhodes had named in his first letter—viz., secrecy

and the retention of the Irish members at Westminster—had been observed, and would be in the future. A more unworthy subterfuge for a man in the responsible position of Mr Schnadhorst it would be impossible to imagine.

In the postscript of the first letter Rhodes showed clearly what was passing through his mind with regard to Egypt; and if he did not deal more explicitly with this matter in the body of the letter, it was because he believed that he had sufficiently impressed his wishes concerning Egypt on Mr Schnadhorst at their various interviews.

It must not be supposed for a moment that Mr Rhodes had any idea that he was buying the Liberal party body and soul, or that his gift would permit him the right at any time to dictate the policy of that party. What he did believe was that he had given a handsome sum to the party at a time when, on Mr Schnadhorst's own admission, contributions were badly needed. To this gift he had attached certain conditions which the party had to accept or decline. By taking the money it was implied that the conditions would be respected. Now, however, the leader of the party was clearly breaking or ignoring the conditions attached to the gift, and therefore Mr Rhodes thought, as every one else in the same position would have thought, that it was only a matter of common honesty that the money should be sent to some charity in the manner indicated. Mr Schnadhorst, however, thought differently, and wrote the following letter:—

“ June 4, 1892.

“ MY DEAR RHODES,—I regret very much I did not see you when you were here, as your letter places me

in a position of extreme perplexity. Your donation was given with two conditions, both of which will be observed, but in a postscript you referred to John Morley's speech on Egypt in the sense in which you have written about Mr Gladstone's reference to the same subject. It is eighteen months ago since I saw you, when you referred to the subject in conversation, and I told you then, as I think now, that J. M.'s speech was very unwise, and that it did not represent the policy of the party. The general election has been coming near, and now it is close at hand. Your gift was intended to help in the Home Rule struggle. It could only do so by being used before the election. Being satisfied that I could observe your conditions, and that J. M.'s speech was simply the expression of an individual opinion, I felt at liberty to pledge your funds for various purposes in connection with the election. This was done to a large extent before Mr G. spoke at Newcastle. I am bound to say that in my view his reference to Egypt was no more than the expression of a pious opinion. It did not alter my feelings that a Liberal Government would not attempt withdrawal. Sir W. Harcourt was annoyed at Mr G.'s reference at the time, and since I heard from you I have seen Lord Rosebery, who will become Foreign Minister, and who, I am satisfied from what he said to me, would not sanction such a policy. Mr Gladstone, I expect, had been worked on by a few individuals, possibly by J. M. alone; but in my opinion it would be simply madness for him to add to the enormous difficulties with which he will have to deal by risking complications on such a subject. There is no danger; besides, the next Liberal Foreign Secretary will be a strong man who will take his own course, very different

from the pliant and supple Granville. Of course I may be wrong—time alone can show; but if I waited for that, the purpose for which I asked your help, and for which you gave, would go unaided.

“You will see what a precious fix you have put me in. I will not make any further promises until I hear from you.—With all good wishes, I am, faithfully yours,

F. SCHNADHORST.”

It is rather amusing to note here the way in which Mr Schnadhorst kindly informs Mr Rhodes what his—Rhodes’—real objects were in giving the money. One would also like to ask, “If Rhodes had made no stipulation about Egypt, why does Mr Schnadhorst take such pains to explain away the real meaning of Mr Gladstone’s speech?” Mr Schnadhorst’s picture, too, of the great statesman not being sincere in what he said, and of urging, for electioneering purposes, on Lord Salisbury and the country, a step which he had no intention of taking himself if returned to power, is not very edifying. Mr Gladstone would scarcely have been obliged to his chief henchman had he known the character the latter was giving him.

Here, then, as briefly and concisely as possible, is the story of Mr Rhodes’ much-discussed gift to the Liberal party. It is a story which would have been told long ago had it not been for a reluctance on Mr Rhodes’ part to say or do anything which might seem to reflect in any way upon the memory of the late Mr Schnadhorst.

An impartial observer, however, is bound to say that neither side comes out of the affair with much added credit or dignity. Mr Rhodes’ knowledge of the world and his keen insight into human nature should have told him that a great party of the State

could not be bound even by its own agent to any given policy, and that even if nine of its leaders had agreed to accept the conditions laid down, the tenth might, with perfect propriety, decline to be bound by them. It was a crude and unstatesmanlike action to attempt to introduce the methods of the office or the Stock Exchange into affairs of State ; but at least Mr Rhodes was perfectly honest and straightforward in what he did, and has no occasion to reproach himself on that score.

As for Mr Schnadhorst, what is to be said of him ? Lightly, and seemingly without any thought of the consequences, he appears to have promised whatever he was asked by Mr Rhodes. He was, so far as can be judged after this lapse of time, quite convinced in his own mind that his party would be compelled to retain Egypt whether it wanted to do so or not ; but Mr Gladstone's speech to which Mr Rhodes refers undoubtedly shows that he, at least, was of a different opinion,—for that it was possible for Mr Gladstone to have played the unworthy part assigned to him by Mr Schnadhorst in his letter to Mr Rhodes cannot be credited for a moment.

Sir William Harcourt and Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman have each denied with great—and almost unnecessary—emphasis that they ever knew of Mr Rhodes' gift to the party funds or the conditions attached to it, and probably Lord Rosebery was equally ignorant. In other words, Mr Schnadhorst seems to have deceived every one alike, and figures in the whole affair in a very unpleasant light.

Thus ends Mr Rhodes' only intimate connection with party polities in this country ; and with the closing of this incident the present volume may be fittingly brought to a conclusion.

APPENDIX I.

COPY OF AGREEMENT SIGNED BY LOBENGULA WITH THE
IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

THE chief Lobengula, ruler of the tribe known as the Amandebele, together with the Mashona and Makakalaka, tributaries of the same, hereby agrees to the following articles and conditions:—

That peace and amity shall continue for ever between her Britannic Majesty, her subjects, and the Amandebele people; and the contracting chief Lobengula engages to use his utmost endeavours to prevent any rupture of the same, to cause the strict observance of this treaty, and so to carry out the spirit of the treaty of friendship which was entered into by his late father the chief Umzilagaas with the then Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, in the year of our Lord 1836.

It is hereby further agreed by Lobengula, chief in and over the Amandebele country, with its dependencies aforesaid, on behalf of himself and people, that he will refrain from entering into any correspondence or treaty with any foreign State or Power to sell, alienate, or cede, or permit, or countenance any sale, alienation, or cession of the whole or any part of the said Amandebele country under his chieftainship, or upon any other subject, without the previous knowledge and sanction of her Majesty's High Commissioner for South Africa.

In faith of which, I, Lobengula, on my part have hereunto set

my hand at Gubulawayo, Amandebeleland, this eleventh day of February, and of her Majesty's reign the Fifty-first.

Witnesses: LOBENGULA **X** his mark.

W. GRAHAM.

G. B. VAN WYK.

Before me, J. S. MOFFAT, *Assistant-Commissioner.*

February 11, 1888.

Approved and ratified by me as her Majesty's High Commissioner for South Africa, this 25th day of April 1888.

HERCULES ROBINSON, *High Commissioner.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CAPE TOWN.

APPENDIX II.

LOBENGULA'S CONCESSION TO MESSRS RUDD, MAGUIRE, AND THOMPSON, 30th October 1888.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that whereas CHARLES DUNELL RUDD, of Kimberley; ROCHFORT MAGUIRE, of London; and FRANCIS ROBERT THOMPSON, of Kimberley, hereinafter called the grantees, have covenanted and agreed, and do hereby covenant and agree, to pay to me, my heirs and successors, the sum of one hundred pounds sterling, British currency, on the first day of every lunar month; and, further, to deliver at my royal kraal one thousand Martini-Henry breech-loading rifles, together with one hundred thousand rounds of suitable ball cartridge, five hundred of the said rifles and fifty thousand of the said cartridges to be ordered from England forthwith and delivered with reasonable despatch, and the remainder of the said rifles and cartridges to be delivered as soon as the said grantees shall have commenced to work mining machinery within my territory; and further, to deliver on the Zambezi river a steamboat with guns suitable for defensive purposes upon the said river, or in lieu of the said steamboat, should I so elect, to pay to me the sum of five hundred pounds sterling, British currency. On the execution of those presents, I, Lobengula, King of Matabeleland, Mashonaland, and other adjoining territories, in exercise of my sovereign powers, and in the presence and with the consent of my council of indunas, do hereby grant and assign unto the said grantees, their heirs, representatives, and assigns jointly and severally, the complete and exclusive charge over all metals and minerals situated and contained in my kingdoms, principalities, and dominions, together with full power to do all things that they may deem necessary to win and procure the same,

and to hold, collect, and enjoy the profits and revenues, if any, derivable from the said metals and minerals, subject to the aforesaid payment; and whereas I have been much molested of late by divers persons seeking and desiring to obtain grants and concessions of land and mining rights in my territories, I do hereby authorise the said grantees, their heirs, representatives, and assigns, to take all necessary and lawful steps to exclude from my kingdoms, principalities, and dominions all persons seeking land, metals, minerals, or mining rights therein, and I do hereby undertake to render them all such needful assistance as they may from time to time require for the exclusion of such persons, and to grant no concessions of land or mining rights from and after this date without their consent and concurrence; provided that, if at any time the said monthly payment of one hundred pounds shall be in arrear for a period of three months, then this grant shall cease and determine from the date of the last-made payment; and, further, provided that nothing contained in these presents shall extend to or affect a grant made by me of certain mining rights in a portion of my territory south of the Ramaquaban river, which grant is commonly known as the Tati Concession.

This given under my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and eighty-eight, at my royal kraal.

LOBENGULA **X** his mark.

C. D. RUDD.

ROCHFORT MAGUIRE.

F. R. THOMPSON.

Witnesses:

CHAS. D. HELM.

J. F. DREYER.

Copy of Indorsement on the Original Agreement.

I hereby certify that the accompanying document has been fully interpreted and explained by me to the chief Lobengula and his full council of indunas, and that all the constitutional usages of the Matabele nation have been complied with prior to his executing the same.

Dated at the Umgusa river this thirtieth day of October 1888.

CHAS. D. HELM.

APPENDIX III.

COPY OF CHARTER GRANTED TO THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA
COMPANY BY THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:—

Whereas a Humble Petition has been presented to Us in Our Council by the Most Noble James, Duke of Abercorn, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath; the Most Noble Alexander William George, Duke of Fife, Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, Privy Councillor; the Right Honourable Edric Frederick, Lord Gifford, V.C.; Cecil John Rhodes, of Kimberley, in the Cape Colony, Member of the Executive Council and of the House of Assembly of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope; Alfred Beit, of 29 Holborn Viaduct, London, Merchant; Albert Henry George Grey, of Howick, Northumberland, Esquire, and George Cawston, of 18 Lennox Gardens, London, Esquire, Barrister-at-Law.

And whereas the said Petition states amongst other things—
That the Petitioners and others are associated, for the purpose of forming a Company or Association, to be incorporated, if to Us should seem fit, for the objects in the said Petition set forth, under the corporate name of The British South Africa Company.

That the existence of a powerful British Company, controlled by those of Our subjects in whom We have confidence, and having its principal field of operations in that region of South Africa lying to the north of Bechuanaland and to the west of Portuguese East Africa, would be advantageous

to the commercial and other interests of Our subjects in the United Kingdom and in Our Colonies.

That the Petitioners desire to carry into effect various concessions and agreements which have been made by certain of the chiefs and tribes inhabiting the said region, and such other concessions, agreements, grants, and treaties as the Petitioners may hereafter obtain within the said region, or elsewhere in Africa, with a view to promoting trade, commerce, civilisation, and good government (including the regulation of liquor traffic with the natives) in the territories which are or may be comprised or referred to in such concessions, agreements, grants, and treaties as aforesaid.

That the Petitioners believe that if the said concessions, agreements, grants, and treaties can be carried into effect, the conditions of the natives inhabiting the said territories will be materially improved and their civilisation advanced, and an organisation established which will tend to the suppression of the slave-trade in the said territories, and to the opening up of the said territories to the immigration of Europeans, and to the lawful trade and commerce of Our subjects and of other nations.

That the success of the enterprise in which the Petitioners are engaged would be greatly advanced if it should seem fit to Us to grant them Our Royal Charter of incorporation as a British Company under the said name or title, or such other name or title, and with such powers as to Us may seem fit for the purpose of more effectually carrying into effect the objects aforesaid.

That large sums of money have been subscribed for the purposes of the intended Company by the Petitioners and others, who are prepared also to subscribe or to procure such further sums as may hereafter be found requisite for the development of the said enterprise, in the event of Our being pleased to grant to them Our Royal Charter of incorporation aforesaid.

Now, therefore, We, having taken the said Petition into Our Royal consideration in Our Council, and being satisfied that

the intentions of the Petitioners are praiseworthy and deserve encouragement, and that the enterprise in the Petition described may be productive of the benefits set forth therein, by Our Prerogative Royal and of Our special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, have constituted, erected, and incorporated, and by this Our Charter for Us and Our Heirs and Royal successors do constitute, erect, and incorporate into one body politic and corporate by the name of the British South Africa Company the said James, Duke of Abercorn, Alexander William George, Duke of Fife, Edric Frederick, Lord Gifford, Cecil John Rhodes, Alfred Beit, Albert Henry George Grey, and George Cawston, and such other persons and such bodies as from time to time become and are members of the body politic and corporate by these presents constituted, erected, and incorporated, with perpetual succession and a common seal, with power to break, alter, or renew the same at discretion, and with further authorities, powers, and privileges conferred, and subject to the conditions imposed by this Our Charter: and We do hereby accordingly will, ordain, give, grant, constitute, appoint and declare as follows (that is to say):—

1. The principal field of the operations of the British South Africa Company (in this Our Charter referred to as “The Company”) shall be the region of South Africa lying immediately to the north of British Bechuanaland, and to the west of the Portuguese dominions.

2. The Company is hereby authorised and empowered to hold, use, and retain for the purposes of the Company and on the terms of this Our Charter the full benefit of the concessions and agreements made as aforesaid, so far as they are valid, or any of them, and all interests, authorities, and powers comprised or referred to in the said concessions and agreements: Provided always that nothing herein contained shall prejudice or affect any other valid and subsisting concessions or agreements which may have been made by any of the chiefs or tribes aforesaid, and in particular nothing herein contained shall prejudice or affect certain concessions granted in and subsequent to the year 1880 relating to the territory usually known as the district of the Tati, nor shall anything herein contained be construed as

giving jurisdiction, administrative or otherwise, within the said district of the Tati, the limits of which district are as follows: viz., from the place where the Shasi river rises to its junction with the Tati and Ramaquaban rivers, thence along the Ramaquaban river to where it rises, and thence along the watershed of those rivers.

3. The Company is hereby further authorised and empowered, subject to the approval of one of Our Principal Secretaries of State (herein referred to as "Our Secretary of State"), from time to time to acquire by any concession, agreement, grant, or treaty, all or any rights, interests, authorities, jurisdictions, and powers of any kind or nature whatever, including powers necessary for the purposes of government, and the preservation of public order, or for the protection of territories, lands, or property, comprised or referred to in the concessions and agreements made as aforesaid or affecting other territories, lands, or property in Africa or the inhabitants thereof, and to hold, use, and exercise such territories, lands, property, rights, interests, authorities, jurisdictions, and powers respectively for the purposes of the Company and on the terms of this Our Charter.

4. Provided that no powers of government or administration shall be exercised under or in relation to any such last-mentioned concession, agreement, grant, or treaty, until a copy of such concession, agreement, grant, or treaty, or in such form, and with such maps or particulars as Our Secretary of State approves, verified as he requires, has been transmitted to him, and he has signified his approval thereof, either absolutely, or subject to any conditions or reservations; and provided also that no rights, interests, authorities, jurisdictions, or powers of any description shall be acquired by the Company within the said district of the Tati, as hereinbefore described, without the previous consent in writing of the owners for the time being of the concessions above referred to relating to the said district and the approval of our Secretary of State.

5. The Company shall be bound by, and shall fulfil all and singular the stipulations on its part contained in any such concession, agreement, grant, or treaty as aforesaid, subject to any

subsequent agreement affecting those stipulations, approved by Our Secretary of State.

6. The Company shall always be and remain British in character and domicile, and shall have its principal office in Great Britain, and the Company's principal representative in South Africa, and the Directors shall always be natural-born British subjects, or persons who have been naturalised as British subjects, by or under an Act of Parliament of Our United Kingdom; but this article shall not disqualify any person nominated a Director by this Our Charter, or any person whose election as a Director shall have been approved by Our Secretary of State, from acting in that capacity.

7. In case at any time any difference arises between any chief or tribe inhabiting any of the territories aforesaid and the Company, that difference shall, if Our Secretary of State so require, be submitted by the Company to him for his decision, and the Company shall act in accordance with such decision.

8. If at any time Our Secretary of State thinks fit to dissent from or object to any of the dealings of the Company with any foreign Power and to make known to the Company any suggestion founded on that dissent or objection, the Company shall act in accordance with such suggestion.

9. If at any time Our Secretary of State thinks fit to object to the exercise by the Company of any authority, power, or right, within any part of the territories aforesaid, on the ground of there being an adverse claim to or in respect of that part, the Company shall defer to that objection until such time as any such claim has been withdrawn or finally dealt with or settled by Our Secretary of State.

10. The Company shall to the best of its ability preserve peace and order in such ways and manners as it shall consider necessary, and may with that object make ordinances (to be approved by Our Secretary of State) and may establish and maintain a force of police.

11. The Company shall to the best of its ability discourage and, so far as may be practicable, abolish by degrees, any system of slave-trade or domestic servitude in the territories aforesaid.

12. The Company shall regulate the traffic in spirits and other intoxicating liquors within the territories aforesaid, so as, as far as is practicable, to prevent the sale of any spirits or other intoxicating liquor to any natives.

13. The Company as such, or its officers as such, shall not in any way interfere with the religion of any class or tribe of the peoples of the territories aforesaid, or of any of the inhabitants thereof, except so far as may be necessary in the interests of humanity; and all forms of religious worship or religious ordinances may be exercised within the said territories, and no hindrance shall be offered thereto except as aforesaid.

14. In the administration of justice to the said peoples or inhabitants, careful regard shall always be had to the customs and laws of the class or tribe or nation to which the parties respectively belong, especially with respect to the holding, possession, transfer, and disposition of lands and goods, and testate or intestate succession thereto, and marriage, divorce, and legitimacy, and other rights of property and personal rights, but subject to any British laws which may be in force in any of the territories aforesaid, and applicable to the peoples or inhabitants thereof.

15. If at any time Our Secretary of State thinks fit to dissent from or object to any part of the proceedings or system of the Company relative to the people of the territories aforesaid, or to any of the inhabitants thereof, in respect of slavery or religion or the administration of justice, or any other matter, he shall make known to the Company his dissent or objection, and the Company shall act in accordance with his directions, duly signified.

16. In the event of the Company acquiring any harbour or harbours, the Company shall freely afford all facilities for or to Our ships therein without payment, except reasonable charges for work done or services rendered or materials or things supplied.

17. The Company shall furnish annually to Our Secretary of State, as soon as conveniently may be after the close of the financial year, accounts of its expenditure for administrative purposes, and of all sums received by it by way of public

revenue as distinguished from its commercial profits, during the financial year, together with a report as to its public proceedings and the condition of the territories within the sphere of its operations. The Company shall also on or before the commencement of each financial year furnish to Our Secretary of State an estimate of its expenditure for administrative purposes and of its public revenue (as above defined) for the ensuing year. The Company shall in addition from time to time furnish to Our Secretary of State any reports, accounts, or information with which he may require to be furnished.

18. The several officers of the Company shall, subject to the rules of official subordination, and to any regulations that may be agreed upon, communicate freely with Our High Commissioner in South Africa, and any others Our officers, who may be stationed within any of the territories aforesaid, and shall pay due regard to any requirements, suggestions, or requests which the said High Commissioner or other officers shall make to them or any of them, and the Company shall be bound to enforce the observance of this Article.

19. The Company may hoist and use on its buildings and elsewhere in the territories aforesaid, and on its vessels, such distinctive flag indicating the British character of the Company as Our Secretary of State and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty shall from time to time approve.

20. Nothing in this Our Charter shall be deemed to authorise the Company to set up or grant any monopoly of trade; provided that the establishment of, or the grant of concessions for banks, railways, tramways, docks, telegraphs, waterworks, or other similar undertakings, or the establishment of any system of patent or copyright approved by Our Secretary of State, shall not be deemed monopolies for this purpose. The Company shall not either directly or indirectly hinder any Company or persons who now are, or hereafter may be, lawfully and peacefully carrying on any business, concern, or venture, within the said District of the Tati, hereinbefore described, but shall, by permitting and facilitating transit by every lawful means to and from the District of the Tati, across its own territories, or where it has jurisdiction in that behalf, and by all other reason-

able and lawful means, encourage, assist, and protect all British subjects who are, or hereafter may be, lawfully and peaceably engaged in the prosecution of a lawful enterprise within the said District of Tati.

21. For the preservation of elephants and other game, the Company may make such regulations and (notwithstanding anything hereinbefore contained) may impose such licence duties on the killing or taking of elephants or such game as they may see fit. Provided that nothing in such regulations shall extend to diminish or interfere with any hunting rights which may have been or may hereafter be reserved to any native chiefs or tribes by treaty, save so far as any such regulations may relate to the establishment and enforcement of a close season.

22. The Company shall be subject to and shall perform and undertake all the obligations contained in or undertaken by Ourselves under any treaty, agreement, or arrangement between Ourselves and any other State or Power, whether already made or hereafter to be made. In all matters relating to the observance of this Article, or to the exercise within the Company's territories for the time being of any jurisdiction exercisable by Us under the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts, the Company shall conform to and observe and carry out all such directions as may from time to time be given in that behalf by Our Secretary of State, and the Company shall appoint all necessary officers to perform such duties, and shall provide such Courts and other requisites as may from time to time be necessary for the administration of justice.

23. The original share capital of the Company shall be £1,000,000, divided into 1,000,000 shares of £1 each.

24. The Company is hereby further specially authorised and empowered for the purpose of this Our Charter from time to time:—

- (i) To increase shares of different classes or descriptions, to increase the share capital of the Company, and to borrow money by debentures or other obligations.
- (ii) To acquire and hold, and to charter or otherwise deal with, steam vessels and other vessels.
- (iii) To establish or authorise banking companies and other

companies and undertakings, or associations of every description, for purposes consistent with the provisions of this Our Charter.

- (iv) To make and maintain roads, railways, telegraphs, harbours, and any other works, which may tend to the development and improvement of the territories of the Company.
- (v) To carry on mining and industries, and to make concessions of mining, forestall, or other rights.
- (vi) To improve, develop, clear, plant, irrigate, and cultivate any lands included within the territories of the Company.
- (vii) To settle any such territories and lands as aforesaid, and to aid and promote immigration.
- (viii) To grant lands for terms of years or in perpetuity, and either absolutely or by way of mortgage or otherwise.
- (ix) To make loans or contributions of money or money's worth, for promoting any of the objects of the Company.
- (x) To acquire and hold personal property.
- (xi) To acquire and hold (without licence in mortmain or other authority than this Our Charter) lands in the United Kingdom, not exceeding five acres in all, at any one time, for the purposes of offices and business of the Company, and (subject to any local laws) lands, in any of Our Colonies or Possessions and elsewhere, convenient for carrying on the management of the affairs of the Company, and to dispose from time to time of any such lands when not required for that purpose.
- (xii) To carry on any lawful commerce, trade, pursuit, business, operations, or dealing whatsoever in connection with the objects of the Company.
- (xiii) To establish and maintain agencies in Our Colonies and Possessions and elsewhere.
- (xiv) To sue and be sued by the Company's name of Incorporation as well in Our Courts in Our United Kingdom, or in Our Courts in Our Colonies or Possessions, or in Our Courts in Foreign Countries or elsewhere.

- (xv) To do all lawful things incidental or conducive to the exercise or enjoyment of the rights, interests, authorities, and powers of the Company in this Our Charter expressed or referred to, or any of them.
- 25. Within one year after the date of this Our Charter, or such extended period as may be certified by Our Secretary of State, there shall be executed by the Members of the Company for the time being a Deed of Settlement, providing as far as necessary for—
 - (i) The further definition of the objects and purposes of the Company.
 - (ii) The classes or descriptions of shares into which the capital of the Company is divided, and the calls to be made in respect thereof, and the terms and conditions of membership of the Company.
 - (iii) The division and distribution of profits.
 - (iv) General Meetings of the Company; the appointment by Our Secretary of State (if so required by him) of an Official Directory, and the number, qualification, appointment, remuneration, rotation, removal, and powers of the Company, and of other officers of the Company.
 - (v) The registration of Members of the Company, and the transfer of shares in the capital of the Company.
 - (vi) The preparation of annual accounts to be submitted to the Members at a General Meeting.
 - (vii) The audit of those accounts by independent auditors.
 - (viii) The making of bylaws.
 - (ix) The making and using of official seals of the Company.
 - (x) The constitution and regulation of Committee or Local Boards of Management.
 - (xi) The making and execution of supplementary deeds of settlement.
 - (xii) The winding up (in case of need) of the Company's affairs.
 - (xiii) The government and regulation of the Company and of its affairs.
 - (xiv) Any other matters usual or proper to be provided for in respect of a Chartered Company.
- 26. The Deed of Settlement shall, before the execution thereof,

be submitted to and approved by the Lords of Our Council, and a certificate of their approval thereof, signed by the Clerk of Our Council, shall be indorsed on this Our Charter and be conclusive evidence of such approval, and on the Deed of Settlement, and such Deed of Settlement shall take effect from the date of such approval, and shall be binding upon the Company, its members, officers, and servants, and for all other purposes whatsoever.

27. The provisions of the Deed of Settlement, or of any supplementary Deed for the time being in force, may be from time to time repealed, varied, or added to by a supplementary Deed made and executed in such manner as the Deed of Settlement prescribes. Provided that the provisions of any such Deed relative to the official Director shall not be repealed, varied, or added to without the express approval of Our Secretary of State.

28. The Members of the Company shall be individually liable for the debts, contracts, engagements, and liabilities of the Company to the extent only of the amount, if any, for the time being unpaid on the shares held by them respectively.

29. Until such Deed of Settlement as aforesaid takes effect the said James, Duke of Abercorn, shall be the President; the said Alexander William George, Duke of Fife, shall be Vice-President; and the said Edric Frederick, Lord Gifford, Cecil John Rhodes, Alfred Beit, Albert Henry George Grey, and George Cawston shall be the Directors of the Company; and may on behalf of the Company do all things necessary or proper to be done under this Our Charter by or on behalf of the Company: Provided always that notwithstanding anything contained in the Deed of Settlement of the Company, the said James, Duke of Abercorn, Alexander William George, Duke of Fife, and Albert Henry George Grey, shall not be subject to retire from office in accordance with its provisions, but shall be and remain Directors of the Company until death, incapacity to act, or resignation, as the case may be.

30. And We do further will, ordain, and declare that this Our Charter shall be acknowledged by Our Governors and Our naval and military officers and Our Consuls and Our other officers in Our Colonies and Possessions, and on the high seas, and else-

where, and they shall severally give full force and effect to this Our Charter, and shall recognise and be in all things aiding to the Company and its officers.

31. And We do further will, ordain, and declare that this Our Charter shall be taken, construed, and adjudged in the most favourable and beneficial sense for and to the best advantage of the Company as well in Our Courts in the United Kingdom, and in Our Courts in our Colonies or Possessions, and in Our Courts in Foreign Countries or elsewhere, notwithstanding that there may appear to be in this Our Charter any non-recital, mis-recital, uncertainty, or imperfection.

32. And we do further will, ordain, and declare, that this Our Charter shall subsist and continue valid, notwithstanding any lawful change in the name of the Company or in the Deed of Settlement thereof, such change being made with the previous approval of Our Secretary of State signified under his hand.

33. And We do further will, ordain, and declare that it shall be lawful for Us, Our heirs and successors, and We do hereby expressly reserve to Ourselves, Our heirs and successors, the right and power by writing under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom, at the end of twenty-five years from the date of this Our Charter, and at the end of every succeeding period of ten years, to add to, alter, or repeal any of the provisions of this Our Charter or to enact other provisions in substitution for or in addition to any of its existing provisions. Provided that the right and power thus reserved shall be exercised only in relation to so much of this Our Charter as relates to administrative and public matters. And we do further expressly reserve to Ourselves, Our heirs and successors, the right to take over any buildings or works belonging to the Company, and used exclusively or mainly for administrative or public purposes, on payment to the Company of such reasonable compensation as may be agreed, or as, failing agreement, may be settled by the Commissioners of Our Treasury. And We do further appoint, direct, and declare that any such writing under the said Great Seal shall have full effect and be binding upon the Company, its members, officers, and servants, and all other persons, and shall be of the same force, effect, and validity

as if its provisions had been part of and contained in these presents.

34. Provided always and We do further declare that nothing in this Our Charter shall be deemed or taken in anywise to limit or restrict the exercise of any of Our rights or powers with reference to the protection of any territories or with reference to the government thereof should We see fit to include the same within Our dominions.

35. And We do lastly will, ordain, and declare, without prejudice to any power to repeal this Our Charter by law belonging to Us, Our heirs and successors, or to any of Our Courts, ministers, or officers independently of this present declaration and reservation, that in case at any time it is made to appear to Us in Our Council that the Company has substantially failed to observe and conform to the provisions of this Our Charter, or that the Company is not exercising its powers under the concessions, agreements, grants, and treaties aforesaid, so as to advance the interests which the Petitioners have represented to Us to be likely to be advanced by the grant of this Our Charter, it shall be lawful for Us, Our heirs and successors, and We do hereby expressly reserve and take to Ourselves, Our heirs and successors, the right and power by writing under the Great Seal of Our United Kingdom to revoke this Our Charter, and to revoke and annul the privileges, powers, and rights hereby granted to the Company.

In witness whereof We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent.

Witness Ourself at Westminister, the 29th day of October, in the fifty-third year of Our reign.

By Warrant under the Queen's Sign Manual.



L. S.

MUIR MACKENZIE.



MAP OF
RHODESIA

Shewing
RAILWAY, TELEGRAPH, TELEPHONE,
POST, COACH AND TRANSPORT ROUTES.

Scale of Miles

REFERENCE
Railways in operation 
 " under construction 
 " proposed 
Telegraphs shown thus 
 " under construction 
Telephones shown thus 
Post Routes &c. " 
Area over which the British South Africa Co. has Mineral Rights, is shown in Light pink.

A historical map of Southern Africa, centered on Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The map shows the British colonies of Rhodesia, Bechuanaland, and the Orange Free State, as well as the Portuguese colony of Mozambique and the German colony of South West Africa. The Zambezi River is a major feature, with the Victoria Falls and the Wankie Coal Area marked. The railway line from Cape Town through Rhodesia to Beira is also shown. The map is color-coded to distinguish between different territories and includes numerous place names and geographical features.

Digitized by srujanika@gmail.com

A historical map of the German East African Protectorate, specifically the region around Lake Nyasa. The map shows the lake's eastern shore with various settlements like Karonga, Florence Bay, Usisya, Nkole, Bandawe, and Kotakota. The word 'PROTECTORATE' is written vertically along the western side of the lake. The surrounding land is shaded in pink and yellow, with several rivers and a small lake 'Sena' labeled. The map is titled 'GERMAN E. AFRIC' at the top.

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